

WILLPOWER: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF AN
INFLUENTIAL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTE

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Military History

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

**WILLPOWER: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF AN INFLUENTIAL LEADERSHIP
ATTRIBUTE** by LCDR David Schappert, 103 pages.

This thesis investigates a single leadership attribute: willpower. Willpower is defined as the amalgamation of continuing in the face of adversity; the refusal to accept failure; and the power to affect a desired outcome in others. The central research question investigates how a leader generates willpower and transmits it to produce a desired effect. The methodology employed investigates three historical military leaders at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war over a sixty year period. The leaders analyzed are General Colin Powell, Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Lieutenant General Harold Moore. This analysis method was chosen to answer the three secondary research questions: Is there a common thread? Is willpower different at different levels of war? Has willpower transmission changed over time? To provide objectivity, a leader who possessed willpower and still failed, General Douglas MacArthur, is also studied. The historical leaders studied are found to have similarities in how they generate and transmit willpower. The willpower transmission techniques employed by the research subjects have not changed significantly over the period studied. However, willpower transmission techniques do reveal differences over the three levels of war.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCNY	City College Of New York
CENTCOM	Central Command
CGSC	Command And General Staff College
CINCFE	Commander In Chief Far East
CINCPAC	Commander In Chief Pacific
CINCPOA	Commander In Chief Pacific Ocean Areas
CJCS	Chairman Of The Joint Chiefs Of Staff
CNO	Chief Of Naval Operations
COMSOPAC	Commander South Pacific Area
EIB	Expert Infantryman's Badge
FORCOM	Forces Command
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
LZ	Landing Zone
MMAS	Master Of Military Arts And Science
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	National Security Council
PAVN	Peoples Army Of Vietnam
POW/MIA	Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action
PRC	People's Republic Of China
PRG	Policy Review Group
ROC	Republic Of China

ROK	Republic Of Korea
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO WILLPOWER

The will of leaders can make the difference between victory and defeat.¹ FM 22-100

The United States of America is currently at war against terrorism. During this conflict, the citizens of this country will rely on the success of their military to protect the nation and its interests. A large percentage of our nation's military budget has been focused on obtaining better, more precise, or stealthy weapons systems in order to more easily defeat our enemies. However, it is always the soldier, sailor, marine, or airman that will ultimately utilize the latest high-technology weapon system. A military leader's duty is to motivate his subordinates and make them as effective as possible. It then follows that a military leader must understand and be effective at training his subordinates and conditioning them to obey his will under stressful conditions. As a professional naval officer, the author has assumed responsibility for helping to protect the nation and is therefore keenly interested in developing skills that will aid him in that endeavor.

Since leadership is the key element of combat power that often makes the difference between success and failure, it is clearly worthy of further study.² This focus on leadership begs the question, what attributes must a good leader possess? LTC Edward Bowie, the Chief Instructor of the Combat Studies Institute at the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC), has written that, "The key to leadership is resolve." Bowie defines resolve, as fixity of purpose, firm determination, or *will*.³

With all due respect to LTC Bowie, the author does not believe his statement completely answers the question on leadership attributes. A leader must not only possess

resolve, he also must strive to transfer his purpose to others in order to cause a desired outcome. The author contends this is more fully described as *willpower*, defined by Merriam-Webster as energetic determination.⁴ Through willpower a leader translates his resolve into the desired action of others. The question then becomes, how does a great leader generate and transfer his will to others? This is the key question the writer proposes to investigate. How do great leaders generate their willpower and transmit their willpower to others in order to create a desired outcome?

For the purpose of this thesis, the author only partially accepts the Merriam-Webster's definition of *willpower* as energetic determination. In a military context, willpower assumes an expanded context. The U.S. Army Field Manual, FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, defines *will* as, "the inner drive that compels leaders to keep going when it would be easier to quit."⁵ FM 22-100 also defines the *warrior ethos* as "the refusal to accept failure."⁶ Refusing to accept failure is a working definition for determination. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines *power* as, "the ability to produce and affect."⁷ A more appropriate definition of willpower therefore includes three specific ideas: continuing in the face of adversity; refusing to accept failure; and the power to affect a desired outcome in others. In a military leadership context, 'others' may be subordinates; it may also be superiors or individuals outside of the military organization. This broader definition of *willpower* describes the author's vision for use in this thesis.

Having offered a suitable definition of willpower, it is time to discuss how this definition will be applied in this thesis. A leader translates his resolve into the desired action of others through the energetic application of willpower. This thesis will focus on

the following primary research question: how does a leader generate willpower and then transmit it to others to have a desired effect?

In order to completely answer the primary research question of how leaders generate and transfer their willpower to their subordinates, the author must consider three secondary research questions. Since all humans are individuals, what motivates them individually is also unique. Similarly, all leaders are unique. However, is there a common thread that connects the methods of all successful leaders and how they have transmitted their willpower to their subordinates? Possible commonalities could include: a similar leadership style, upbringing or values, methods of communicating, goals, or treatment of their subordinates. The search for a “common thread” among the willpower transmission methods of different leaders will answer the first secondary research question.

Complicating any study of willpower, the challenges that face a leader vary with the size of the organization he leads and the complexity of the tasks the organization performs. It is generally accepted without argument that what works at one level may not necessarily work at another level. Therefore, the manner that a leader applies his willpower would vary as the size and complexity of the organization varies. For a small organization, a leader may utilize a direct or face-to-face leadership approach. As an organization grows in size, the leader is forced to use policies or procedures since it is no longer possible to interact with all of the individuals in an organization on a daily basis. For a simple task, a leader may focus his entire organization’s resources on the assigned task and seek a solution. As the level of complexity of the task increases, the leader may need to break the task down into smaller subtasks and manage the efforts of several organizations each working on a part of the larger problem.

The next secondary research question will focus on answering the following. How must a leader change his methods as the size of the organization increases? Army doctrine provides a convenient framework to clarify this change in leadership perspective and method as the organization grows in size. This doctrine has identified three levels of war: tactical, operational, and strategic. These levels roughly correspond to an increasing organizational size as shown in Figure 1: Levels of War. A small unit, company or

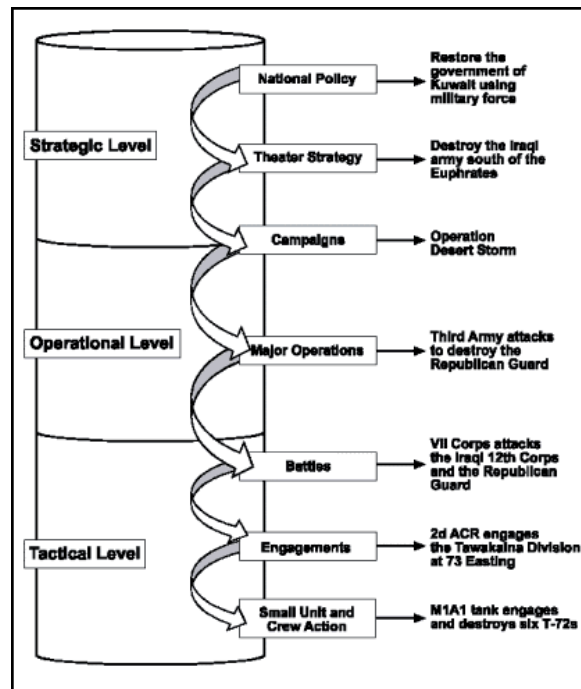


Figure 1: Levels of War. Reprinted from Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual, FM 3-0 *Operations* (Washington, DC, June 2001), 4-7.

platoon, will generally conduct their operations at the tactical level while an Army Corps will conduct the majority of its operations at the operational level. The National Security

Strategy and Theater Security Cooperation plans are examples of discussions that define how resources will be employed at the strategic level of war.

With regard to how a leader must change his methods as the complexity of the tasks assigned to his organization increases, Army doctrine provides a framework to clarify the discussion. As the level of complexity increases the type, or level, of leadership changes from direct, to organizational, to strategic (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Army Leadership Levels. Reprinted from Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual, FM 22-100 *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC, August 1999), 2-11.

Clearly there is overlap between the levels and there are no signposts delineating the borders between the levels of leadership or war. This overlap between the levels of leadership and the levels of war are not well depicted in these figures. However, there are elements of direct leadership at the higher levels of leadership (strategic) and tactical decisions are still made at the higher levels of war (strategic), and vice versa. However,

by using the levels of war as a guideline, it will be easier to answer the question of how methods change with an increase in size or complexity of an organization.

The author will use the levels of war as a framework for this study of willpower. As a leader moves up the levels of war, from tactical to strategic, the size and complexity of the organization increases. Therefore this second research question maybe restated: how does willpower transmission change as the level of war changes? In order to answer this question, the author will need to study at least one example at all three levels of war. Selecting case studies of willpower generation and application related to each level of war and leadership allows a conclusion to be drawn that responds to this secondary question.

A third variable that affects a leader is time or historical context. Individuals are products of their society. Historically, society and its values have changed over time. It then follows that what motivates a soldier to fulfill a leader's wishes may also have changed over a given time period. Has willpower and the method by which it is transmitted changed also? In order to answer this third secondary question, the author will need to investigate leaders over a finite time period to determine if successful willpower transmission has changed over time or if the principles are constant.

In an effort to successfully answer all three of the secondary questions, and draw a conclusion to the primary question, the author will examine the leadership and willpower transmission of four military luminaries: Lieutenant General Hal Moore, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, and General Colin Powell. Historically this will bound the study from World War II (when ADM Nimitz served as Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) and Commander in Chief, Pacific

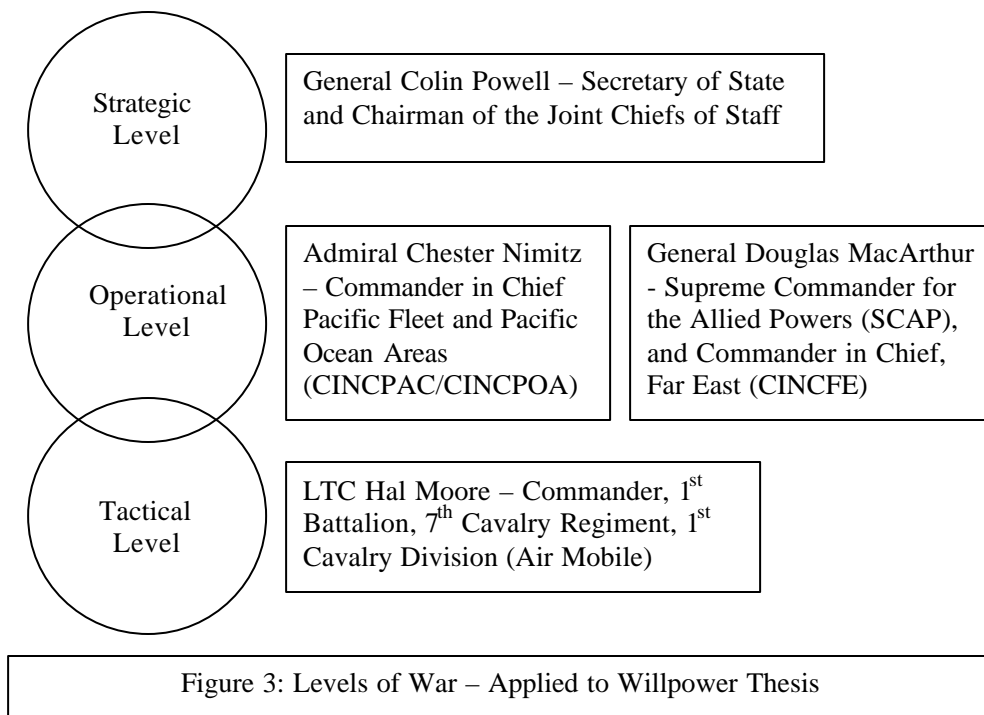
Ocean Areas (CINCPAC)) to the present (when GEN Powell served as the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff during operations Just Cause and Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Secretary of State during the Global War on Terrorism).

The sixty-year time period should provide an adequate gauge to determine if the passage of time has affected how willpower is employed to answer the final secondary research question. By including a contemporary leader (Secretary Powell) within the framework of the investigation, the author intends to draw valid conclusions for application by current leaders. It is assumed that three unique leadership styles is an adequate sample set from which to draw general conclusions.

As previously mentioned, there is overlap between the levels of war. This overlap may cause confusion, or engender subjective arguments, that could weaken the conclusions. To provide clarity and preempt these discussions, the author maintains that the three subjects proposed for this thesis represent all three levels of war. Specifically, LTC Moore operated at the tactical level, ADM Nimitz operated at the operational level, and Gen. Powell operated at the strategic level, during the indicated periods. This framework will be applied for this thesis and is depicted graphically in Figure 3: Levels of War--Applied to Willpower Thesis, provided below.

The underlying assumptions for the thesis is that it is possible for the author to successfully quantify willpower, identify how it is being applied, and establish a credible cause and effect relationship between the leader's will and the actions of subordinates. The author will provide adequate examples of the actions of the subject leaders within a historical context. A proper understanding of the chain of events coupled with the author's definition of willpower and deductive logic will convince the reader of the cause

and effect relationship. Further, the author has assumed that the fundamental challenges of leadership and willpower application are the same in both the Army and the Navy. Regardless of the differences in operating environments and types of missions subordinates performs, leaders in both services most motivate their subordinates into accomplishing tasks to translate their vision into reality. Therefore case studies of leaders from either Armed Service that focus on how leaders apply willpower can produce valid general conclusions that can be applied by officers in either service.



To make clear the focus of this thesis it is important to state what will not be covered. Many military operations have focused on the objective of destroying the

enemy's will to fight or power to resist. General William T. Sherman's famous march to the sea during the American Civil War, or the firebombing of Dresden, Germany by the US Army Air Corps during World War II are two well-known examples. In order to limit this project to a manageable level appropriate for the Master of Military Arts and Science (MMAS) program, this thesis will not look at the destruction of an enemy's will. Rather it is to be confined to how a leader imposes his will on his subordinates. To further narrow the focus, the thesis will deal only with how relatively recent American military leaders generated and applied their willpower during combat operation in the time period of 1941 to the present.

The general method planned for accomplishing the thesis is to review, analyze and interpret both primary and secondary sources of information on how the three subjects generated and applied their willpower within their unique historical context. Information gleaned will then be synthesized to answer the secondary questions, and ultimately the primary question. Organizationally, the thesis will be constructed with six chapters: an introduction; four historical vignettes chapters that examine willpower; and a conclusion chapter. In order to ensure objectivity in this study, the author must provide a counterpoint: a military leader who possessed willpower but was not successful. This objective counterpoint will be included as the fourth historical vignette, for ease of comparison, near the conclusion chapter.

The first subject, chronologically, is Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Following the Japanese Imperial Navy's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, a large portion of the U.S. Pacific Fleet had been destroyed. Following this debacle, President Roosevelt relieved Admiral Husband Kimmel, Commander in Chief, Pacific

(CINCPAC), and replaced him with Admiral Nimitz. Upon his arrival, Admiral Nimitz inherited a staff that was demoralized, and had collectively blamed themselves for failing to defend the fleet properly. How did Admiral Nimitz revitalize this group and reforge them into a functional naval command staff that went on to the future successes in the Pacific theater? Answering this question will illustrate how willpower is generated and transmitted at the operational level of war.

Fleet Admiral Nimitz refused to write his own memoirs and prevented them from being written during his lifetime. Admiral Nimitz was concerned that his observations could easily be mistaken for criticism of his subordinates.⁸ For this reason there are relatively few primary sources available. However, there are excellent secondary sources that will be used to analyze Nimitz's method of willpower. *Nimitz*, by Elmer Belmont Potter, is considered to be the definitive biography of Admiral Nimitz. Mr. Potter served in the Pacific during World War II, collaborated on several projects with ADM Nimitz following his retirement, and was a family friend and frequent guest at the Nimitz residence. For these reasons, Mr. Potter was selected by Mrs. Nimitz to write this biography shortly after the admiral's death. This relationship allowed Mr. Potter access to many primary sources that he drew upon while writing this biographer.⁹

The subject of the second vignette chapter is Lieutenant General Harold Moore. In November 1965, then LTC Moore led 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, of the 1st Cavalry Division (air mobile) that fought in the first major battle involving U.S. troops in the Vietnam War. His unit fought against a numerically superior enemy in harsh conditions and inflicted great losses on the enemy. His direct and organizational leadership at the tactical level of war under these harsh, kill-or-be-killed conditions

provides an opportunity to examine how he transmitted his willpower to shape and prepare his unit prior to this engagement to meet these challenges. Further, the judicious use of LTC Moore's willpower may have been the decisive component that sustained his unit throughout this engagement.

LTG Moore has coauthored a book with Mr. Joseph Galloway titled, *We Were Soldiers Once . . . And Young* that vividly describes the battle of Ia Drang. This will serve as a primary source for the thesis along with Lt. Gen. Moore's operational order and the after action report filed following the Battle of Ia Drang. Secondary sources will be used to help provide a more complete historical context.

The subject of the third vignette chapter speaks directly to how willpower is generated and transmitted at the strategic level of war. General Colin Powell, the present Secretary of State, served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) during the Persian Gulf war in 1991. When Iraqi forces unexpectedly occupied the neighboring country of Kuwait and threatened our ally Saudi Arabia, our nation was faced with a direct threat to a primary, strategic national interest--oil. In his position as the CJCS, GEN Powell was a driving force behind the shaping and implementation of the multinational coalition that successfully executed Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. As the current Secretary of State in President George W. Bush's Administration, he is intimately involved in formulating U.S. foreign policy and defining how American military and diplomatic power will be used in the Global War on Terrorism. A study of Secretary Powell's book, *My American Journey*, should be an adequate primary source with regard to the secondary question of how his willpower is generated. The use of Bob Woodward's books *The Commanders* and *Bush At War* will add depth to the research and

will be used to determine how Secretary Powell transmits his willpower at the strategic level of war.

The fourth and final vignette chapter will focus on General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. The purpose of this fourth vignette is to test the validity of the research question and provide objectivity to the study. This thesis is not attempting to prove that by merely possessing willpower a leader guarantees success. The selection of one of the most famous and successful Army officers of all time as the objective counterpoint for this study may appear strange and destined to fail. But consider that at the end of his long and brilliant career, GEN MacArthur was relieved of duty as the United Nations Combined Forces Commander in Korea. The cause of his relief was a profound disagreement, or a battle of *will*, over strategy with President Harry Truman.

For the purpose of this thesis, GEN MacArthur is considered to be operating at the operational level of war. By studying biographies of GEN MacArthur, as well as other sources, the author will analyze the methods of GEN MacArthur. This analysis will prove that *willpower* is not the only ingredient in the recipe for military success. In fact, in this case, an over-abundance of willpower may have been the undoing of this famous hero.

When considering the significance of this proposed thesis, keep foremost in mind the operative word from the research question: *how*. The author posits that this is a much more profound question in relation to willpower generation and transmission than the other standard journalistic questions: who, what, where, when, or why. This thesis has personal significance to the author due to his interest in making himself a better leader and therefore a more successful naval officer. A better understanding of *how* willpower

can be used to motivate others and positively affect their efforts will be of great personal value.

By studying several leaders who excelled under some of the harshest conditions of war, lessons can be learned to overcome the inadequacies of peacetime experience. By selecting military officers from both the Army and the Navy as subjects for this study, the author seeks to draw conclusions that can be used by professional officers in all of the armed services. This thesis will add to the body of knowledge on willpower, its application, and its vital role in harnessing the full military potential of a unit in any branch of the armed services.

¹Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC, 31 August 1999), 2-11.

²Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC, 14 June 2001), 4-7.

³LTC Edward Bowie. "Resolve and Military Leadership." [On-line] Available from <http://www.cgsc2.leavenworth.army.mil/csi/research>; Internet: accessed 20 August 2002.

⁴Merriam-Webster's Online Collegiate Dictionary, available at <http://www.m-w.com>.

⁵Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC, 14 June 2001), 4-7.

⁶*Ibid.*, 2-21.

⁷Merriam-Webster's Online Collegiate Dictionary, available at <http://www.m-w.com>.

⁸George M. Hall, *The Fifth Star: High Command in the Era of Global War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 102.

⁹E.B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976), xi-xii.

CHAPTER 2

WILLPOWER AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL OF WAR

A Study of the Methods of Lieutenant General Hal Moore

“There are no bad regiments, there are only bad officers.”
-Field Marshal Lord Slim¹

The converse of Field Marshal Lord Slim’s erudite quote, appearing on the title page for this chapter, may also be true: there are no good regiments only good officers. While this may not be true in every case, certainly a good officer can make a profound, positive impact on his unit. An excellent example of this can be found in Lieutenant General Harold G. (Hal) Moore, USA (Ret.). To begin the study of willpower, at the tactical level of warfare, this chapter will focus on the wartime experience of then-LTC Moore. LTC Moore commanded the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, of the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) during the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley (Ia, which means river, and is pronounced “Eye,” is a word from the Montagnard people, an indigenous mountain tribe of Vietnam).² This was the first major engagement between the U.S. Army and the North Vietnamese regular forces, the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN), and took place in November 1965.³ This chapter will provide the reader with a brief historical vignette of the formation of LTC Moore’s unit and its experience in Vietnam, and then focus on how LTC Moore generated and transmitted his willpower to his men to cause the successful conduct of their mission under harsh conditions.

Historical Vignette and Background

In a televised address to the nation on the morning of 28 July 1965, President Lyndon Johnson described the deteriorating situation in Vietnam and declared: “We

intend to convince the communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms. I have today ordered to Vietnam the Air Mobile Division.”⁴ This division was the 1st Cavalry Division and it had been built from the ground up for the conflict in Vietnam.⁵

In 1965, the newly formed 1st Cavalry Division was one of the most elite units in the Army. This unit boasted the latest technology (helicopters and M-16 rifles) not prevalent in the rest of the Army at that time. Many of the officers and key non-commissioned officers were handpicked and combat veterans of World War II, the Korean War, or both.⁶ The men of the 1st Division also benefited from more than a year of hard training together in the latest air mobility tactics. Morale was also very high within the unit and the 7th Cavalry Regiment had adopted the colors and traditions of the historic regiment that had once been commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn.⁷ Unfortunately, in order to prevent a political backlash from his decision to widen the war effort, President Johnson did not extend the expiring enlistments of many soldiers and officers prior to the unit deploying overseas. This caused 2,700 of the most experienced and best trained men of the 15,000-man division to be left at home, adversely impacting the combat strength and experience level of the division as a whole.⁸

LTC Moore’s 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, of the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) received orders to execute an air assault by helicopter into the Ia Drang Valley to conduct search and destroy operations from 14-16 November.⁹ However, only sixteen UH-1D Huey helicopters would be available for the operation. This meant that only approximately one third of the combat strength of the battalion could be airlifted at a time. It would require over four hours to move the entire battalion into the planned area

of operations, a landing zone designated X-Ray (LZ X-Ray). This landing zone was the only suitable spot in the Ia Drang Valley for several miles in either direction and was near the base of the Chu Pong Massif (mountain), a suspected enemy stronghold. The initial intelligence reports indicated that there was an unknown, but possibly substantial, enemy force in the area.¹⁰ The incompleteness of this initial report was rapidly revealed.

At 1048 a.m. the first wave of 160 men, led by LTC Moore who was the first man to step off any of the helicopters, arrived at LZ X-Ray (see Figure 4). By 1120 a.m.,

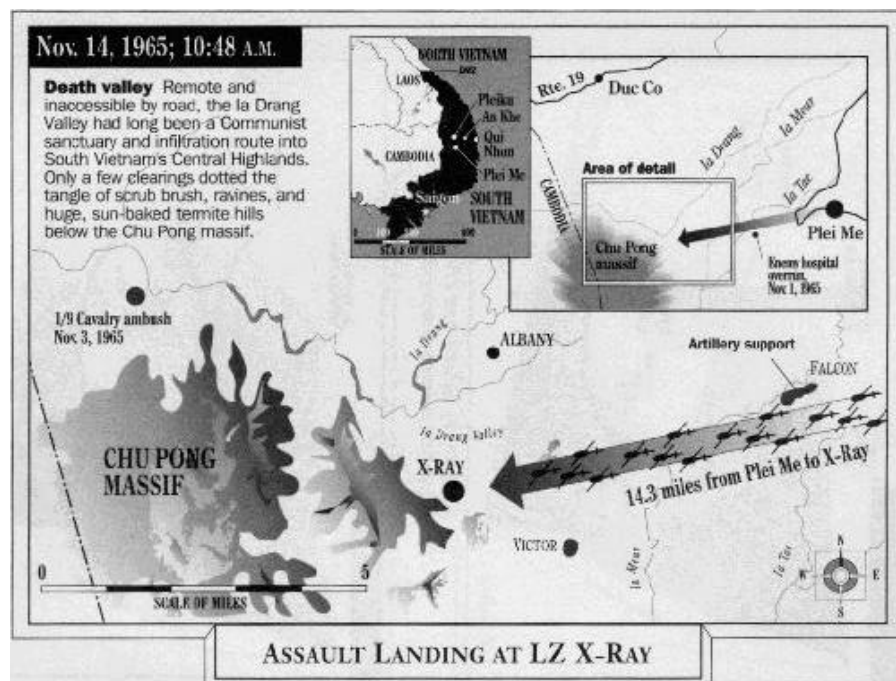


Figure 4: Movement of 1st Battalion to LZ X-Ray. Downloaded from <http://www.lzxr.com/overview.html>.

a short distance from LZ X-Ray, a reconnaissance squad took a prisoner. Under interrogation, and through an interpreter, the prisoner revealed “there are three PAVN

[People's Army of Vietnam] battalions on the mountain who want very much to kill Americans but have not been able to find any." The three enemy battalions totaled more than 1,600 men, making the initial odds 10 to 1.¹¹ LTC Moore ordered his men to move off the landing zone in the direction of the mountain where they had found the prisoner.

At approximately 1 p.m., as additional men of the 1st Battalion were landing at LZ X-Ray, the first elements of the battalion were engaged in a heavy firefight against a numerically superior force.¹² This fighting would be characterized by brutal hand-to-hand struggles in dense jungle and five-foot tall elephant grass that prevented infantrymen from seeing more than a few feet. The struggle would continue unabated for two days. One soldier remarked, "The enemy seemed to be growing out of the weeds."¹³ During this battle 634 People's Army of Vietnam soldiers were killed and an estimated 1215 were wounded while 79 US soldiers were killed and 121 were wounded.¹⁴

Three factors soon became critical for the continued survival of the beleaguered Americans. The landing zone had to be maintained open to allow the continued flow of the remainder of the battalion into the area to reinforce the men already committed to the battle. Further, this landing zone served as the only logistical lifeline bringing in ammunition, food and water, as well as evacuating the wounded for medical treatment. The ability to coordinate fire support in close proximity to the US Army troops was necessary to offset the numerical inferiority of the American troops. And most importantly, strong effective leadership was key to coordinating these factors in securing the eventual victory. How was LTC Moore able to generate his willpower in this life or death environment? What techniques did he utilize in this adverse environment to transmit his willpower to his troops that sustained them and motivated them to win a

victory? This vignette will be the basis of the study of willpower at the tactical level of war.

Source of Willpower

Along with several of his senior noncommissioned officers, LTC Moore was a combat veteran of the Korean War. LTC Moore commanded two infantry companies and was the regimental operations officer in the 7th Infantry Division that saw action during the fighting for the aptly named Pork Chop Hill.¹⁵ As a twenty-six year old first lieutenant, LTC Moore volunteered to test experimental parachutes. On his first jump, the new steerable parachute he was testing hung up on the tail of the C-46 aircraft he had just exited. He was dragged through the air at 110 miles per hour at 1,500 above the ground until he managed to cut himself free and reach the ground safely using his backup parachute.¹⁶

Clearly this man, tempered by the dangerous experiences of parachute testing and combat experience, was uniquely suited for the challenges he would face in the Ia Drang Valley. He fully understood the rigors of combat leadership and was prepared to overcome them. As Rear Admiral (Ret) Dave Oliver points out in his book *Lead On!*,

Bravery is a learned skill. If you are in the leadership business you are in the business of not letting your body react naturally to fear. Learn through experience how close you can stand to the dragon's breath and control your emotions.¹⁷

By “standing close to the dragon” throughout his early career, LTC Moore had learned the coolheaded skills that would serve as the basis for his willpower in later challenges.

Shortly after the first wave of men landed at LZ X-Ray, LTC Moore's men took a captive. This prisoner stated that there were three battalions of North Vietnamese Army troops a short distance from their location, and that they wanted to kill the American

soldiers very badly. LTC Moore states that his reaction to this disconcerting piece of intelligence, that he was facing a well-trained and motivated foe that currently outnumbered his force more than ten to one, was, “they were determined to kill us all. I was *determined* that wasn’t going to happen.”¹⁸

Recall the definition of willpower used in this thesis as the sum of energetic *determination* in the face of adversity, the refusal to accept failure, and the ability to produce a desirable outcome in others. By his statement LTC Moore is clearly displaying his will and determination, the first component of willpower. This determination to survive would serve as the source for LTC Moore’s willpower.

Methods of Willpower Transmission

The leadership, or willpower transmission, techniques used by LTC Moore to be highlighted in this thesis are divided into two broad categories. According to LTC Moore, they are: those that are accomplished in preparation for combat; and those accomplished while in battle.¹⁹

Immediately after taking command of his battalion, LTC Moore set about creating a culture of excellence in his unit. He addressed his men as follows: “you are a good battalion. You will get better. I will do my best, and I expect the same from each of you.”²⁰ He established a 1st Battalion policy that only first place trophies would be displayed in the trophy case. “Second place in our line of work,” LTC Moore explained, “is defeat of the unit on the battlefield, and death for the individual in combat.”²¹ The point of this culture of excellence was simple. It installed his “*will to win*” (Moore’s italics) in his unit.²²

This culture of excellence was pervasive throughout 1st Battalion and contributed to LTC Moore's successfully affecting a desirable outcome in everything the battalion accomplished. A 'will to win,' stated another way, is a refusal to accept failure. This is the second component of willpower, and LTC Moore, by creating a culture of excellence within his battalion, had inculcated his organization. A similar idea is expressed in current Army doctrine as the *warrior ethos*.²³

Another preparatory method LTC Moore used to transmit his will to his men was by creating a personal bond between himself and the men of his battalion. There are several examples of how LTC Moore built this bond, but three will suffice to illustrate how he did it and why this was important.

First, as was his normal practice, LTC Moore personally read aloud his operations order to his staff and the commanding officers of his subordinate units prior to their boarding the helicopters for the search and destroy mission his battalion was departing on later that morning. He did this so, "they could hear my voice and understand by my inflection what was important to me, should I die."²⁴ As an Israeli General once noted, "when I give difficult orders, I like to do so in person, so that I can meet any soldiers eyes."²⁵ His personal communication eliminated possible misunderstanding of his intent and increased the likelihood of its success.

The second example of how LTC Moore developed a willpower bond with his men is what the author will refer to as "the pledge." On 13 August 1965 at Fort Benning, Georgia, the day before the battalion was departing for Vietnam, LTC Moore held a dress formation on the parade ground with the families of his troops attending. He addressed the group with a speech where he stated:

We are going into battle against a tough and determined enemy. Some of us are going to die--maybe me, certainly some of you. I can't promise you that I will bring you home alive. But this I swear . . . when we go into battle, I will be the first to step on the field and I will be the last to step off. And I will leave no one behind . . . dead or alive. We will come home together.²⁶

This “pledge” is a powerful statement. People, by their nature, like to know where they are going and what is going to happen to them. A soldier departing for war in a faraway, foreign country faces many unknowns. This “pledge” is a very strong statement of reassurance for a soldier who may never see his family again, but at least his body will return home. This is something more than it seems. For the soldier who is tossed into the dark sea of war, this “pledge” may be the only splinter of flotsam to keep him afloat in the towering, storm-whipped waves.

This is the only documented “pledge” of its kind the author’s research discovered. LTC Moore was good to his word throughout his tour in Vietnam. The very existence of a national holiday for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA) remembrance clearly illustrates how rare and difficult this achievement is. In later years, his men revealed the value of the “pledge” to LTC Moore. According to LTC Moore,

I’ve had many of my troopers tell me that that promise meant a great deal to them and helped them in battle, because they knew if they went down that they would not be left lying on the ground for the vultures, insects, and weather, but would be brought back to their families for burial.²⁷

The author maintains that this “pledge” helped prepare his men for the rigors of combat and made them more likely to respond to his will during the heat of battle.

The third example of building this bond with his troops is subtler but perhaps goes the farthest to validate the bond in the mind of his subordinates. LTC Moore’s actions constantly re-enforced his words. He promised to be the first one on the field of battle

and he was the first to step off the helicopter at LZ X-Ray. According to Moore, he never lost a man in two wars making good on his “pledge.”²⁸ In his book, LTG Moore consistently refers to his troops individually in detail: such as, “Specialist 5 Scott O. Henry of Columbus, Georgia.”²⁹ This degree of personal knowledge of his troops reveals a level of concern for their well being that did not go unnoticed by them. In short, LTG Moore’s actions, more than his powerful words, increased his credibility in the eyes of his subordinates and convinced them that he was a man they could trust. This credibility made his subordinates more likely to respond to his willpower and execute his instructions.

These three examples show how LTC Moore built a willpower bond with his men prior to battle. This willpower bond created a connection between the leader and the led and made it easier for LTC Moore to produce a desired outcome in others: the third component of willpower.

Having established a willpower bond with his men before deployment, LTC Moore took steps to transmit his willpower in battle. The author has observed that at the tactical level of war, a leader’s willpower transmission revolves around three central principles: understanding the nature of your troops; understanding how troops will respond to hazards and using that to the leader’s advantage; and detaching himself to envisage what comes next.

It is important to remember as a leader that no matter how much you emphasize excellence within your organization, as LTC Moore clearly did, your organization is still comprised of imperfect humans. Mistakes will naturally happen, and in the case of soldiers engaged in combat, the results of errors can be tragic. How a commander reacts

to these mistakes and treats soldiers following the inevitable mistake will have lasting effects on how that soldier will respond to a leader's future instructions. By treating them properly the leader can ensure that they will recover from their mistakes faster and be more receptive to your future willpower transmission. This can be clearly shown from LTC Moore's experience.

At one point during the deadly struggle at LZ X-Ray, an Air Force jet mistakenly dropped two napalm canisters on U.S. Army personnel in the battalion command area causing several horrifying casualties and igniting cases of reserve ammunition. LTC Moore's reaction to the responsible officer is illuminating. He told Air Force First Lieutenant Charlie Hastings, the Forward Air Controller who was responsible for coordinating the proper placement of the close air support, "don't worry about that one Charlie. Just keep them coming."³⁰ This understanding and acceptance of the nature of flawed humans in battle would surely have left LT Hastings well motivated, or receptive to LTC Moore's willpower. From that point forward, LT Hastings would naturally be at his best working to earn the second chance he received from LTC Moore.

This soft touch for LT Hastings' mistake was not motivated solely by LTC Moore's magnanimous personality. Rather, there are practical aspects at work. Regardless of the magnitude of the consequences, LTC Moore must have LT Hastings operating efficiently for survival. His function, coordinating the placement of dozens of close air support sorties, plays a critical role overcoming the battalion's relative shortcomings in firepower. No other individual present at LZ X-Ray could assume LT Hastings' duty. Recognizing that LT Hastings would blame himself for the error and his performance would suffer, LTC Moore immediately provided him with a succinct vote of

confidence to restore his efficiency. By acting in this way, LTC Moore limits the likelihood of future errors as well as strengthens his leadership bond with his subordinate.

For the men of the 1st Battalion, the battle in the Ia Drang valley was a truly terrifying experience. Taking into account the eventual reinforcements, the troops were outnumbered more than four to one at all times during the struggle and they were constantly in mortal danger. The cavalry troops experienced frontal attacks by hundreds of the enemy under cover of darkness, sniper fire from above them in the trees, infiltrators who could approach to within a few feet of their rapidly dug foxholes due to the tall elephant grass, mortar rounds, hand grenades, and rocket attacks all combined to make LZ X-Ray a deadly piece of jungle real estate. This environment has a very predictable effect on LTC Moore's troops: survival became paramount in their minds. According to the noted military historian, John Keegan, "Soldiers in a battle are at great personal risk and really only care about personal survival. The win/lose value structure of commanders is not relevant and may be considered hostile."³¹

For LTC Moore, understanding this behavior is the first step in transferring his willpower to, or motivating, his subordinates. Keegan points out in his book, *The Face of Battle*, "For soldiers, personal survival is often wrapped up in group survival. A small group of six or seven will fight for the better chance of survival."³² This observation is reinforced by the experience of SGT Bill Beck. In charge of an M-60 machine gun crew at LZ X-Ray, he was asked after his experience at Ia Drang, "What did you fight for?" Beck's straightforward answer: "We fought for each other, we fought for survival. I was trying to save his butt, because I knew he was going to save mine."³³ Understanding his subordinate's dilemma, LTC Moore used willpower transmission techniques to turn this

to his advantage: first he was seen present with his troops; second he made clear that his competence increased the small group's chance of survival.

By exposing himself to the same dangers his troops faced, LTC Moore included himself in the "small group" that his troops associated with their best chance for survival. This exposure was not only due to his physical presence on the battlefield but in the additional duties that LTC Moore assumed. Major Bruce Crandall commanded the helicopter squadron that made nearly continuous shuttles under enemy fire into LZ X-Ray. He recalls, "as we broke over the trees into the clearing I could see LTC Moore standing up at the far end of the LZ, exposing himself to enemy fire in order to get us into the safest position possible in the LZ."³⁴ This technique used by LTC Moore may have been necessary due to a lack of personnel to execute this dangerous duty. However it is also an excellent example of what Keegan calls the imperative of example: "those who impose risk must be seen to share it and only then expect that their orders will be obeyed."³⁵ By placing himself at risk, he included himself in the "small group" of his battalion, and made the transmission of his willpower to his troops possible in that dangerous situation.

Once LTC Moore made himself included in the "small group" of his troops, he maximized his impact on the group. He sought to infuse his battalion with his own positive attitude, or willpower, by the power of his own example. In his brief treatise on battlefield leadership, LTC Moore states that a leader

Must exhibit his determination to prevail no matter what the odds or how desperate the situation. He must have and display the *WILL TO WIN* (Moore's emphasis) by his actions, his words, his tone of voice on the radio and face to face, his appearance, his demeanor, his countenance, the look in his eyes.³⁶

Recall that the refusal to accept failure is one of the key components of definition of willpower used in this thesis. This “will to win” is further reinforced by LTC Moore’s display of confidence. From this attitude his troops deduced that success (survival) is not only possible, but also likely in this adverse environment. Why else would their leader be so full of confidence? This behavior has a positive, self-reinforcing quality that makes the survival of the men of his battalion more and more likely.

LTC Moore did more than just affect the attitude of his troops while transmitting his willpower to them at LZ X-Ray. By remaining calm, he was able to bring the benefit of his experience and competence to bear and coordinate the array of resources at his disposal to their maximum advantage. He displayed his determination or willpower with his calm demeanor, positioned his troops to the maximum advantage, and coordinated the power of artillery and close air support. Major Bruce Crandall recalls of LTC Moore,

In combat, I don’t think he had a peer. [LTC Moore was a] tremendous, brave, solid person. At no time was he ever over excited, never reacted without having a good plan, without having an idea of what he wanted to do.³⁷

This personal competence increased the likelihood of survival for his troops, reinforced his position of authority, and cemented his place within his troops “survival group.”

Having made the most of a bad situation, by using the normal reaction of his subordinate to battle to his advantage, LTC Moore used one other willpower transmission technique. He possessed the ability to remove himself from the immediate distractions of the battlefield and determine what he could do to prepare for future challenges. By keeping a clear vision of what he would need to do next, LTC Moore increased his ability to induce a desired outcome in his subordinates by anticipating future requirements. He describes his method in his own words as follows,

In battle, I periodically detached myself mentally for a few seconds . . . and asked myself, ‘what am I doing that I should not be doing, and what am I not doing that I should be doing to influence the situation in my favor?’ There is always one more thing you can do to influence any situation in your favor--and after that one more thing--and after that one more thing. Three strikes and you’re NOT out!³⁸

This ability is predicated upon a substantial foundation of self-confidence and mental discipline. To ignore, at least temporarily, the screams of the wounded and the whiz of automatic weapons fire directed at you is no simple accomplishment. This ability enabled him to think through the situation clearly and determine his next course of action. Such ability can only be achieved through preconditioning and gave him a distinct advantage in setting the conditions for future success.

While LTC Moore found himself in a life or death struggle that (hopefully) few of us may ever find ourselves in, the methods that were used for willpower generation and transmission can be extracted for general use. By becoming accustomed to the dangers of his profession early in his career, LTC Moore tempered himself to not respond normally to fear. This allowed him to perform during the adverse conditions of the battle. He prepared his unit to accept his willpower more readily by creating a culture of excellence within the organization. By creating an organization that expected excellence as the standard, he was refusing to accept failure. His men identified with him closely due to the shared nature of the threat to their survival and responded to his instructions more readily due to his confidence, competence, and demeanor. He forced himself to look through the ambiguity of the current situation to the next challenge and prepared himself and his subordinates appropriately to meet it. In being accepted by his subordinates into their “survival group” and being identified as a key component that increased their prospect

for survival, LTC Moore's instructions were more likely to be followed. This gave him the power to affect a desired in others.

LTG Moore's actions described above display all of the author's conditions for successful willpower generation and transmission. When the last helicopter departed from LZ X-Ray, the last person to board the helicopter was LTG Moore. True to his word he was "the last to step off the field of battle." Future leaders of troops at the tactical level of war would be well served to learn lessons from his example.

¹Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1976), 216.

²George C. Herring, *The 1st Cavalry and the Ia Drang Valley, 18 Oct – 24 Nov 1965*, In *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*, edited by Charles Heller and William Stofft (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 314.

³Herring, 304.

⁴Tom Yellin, prod., *Vietnam, They Were Young and Brave* (New York, NY: ABC News Documentary from TV program Day1One, 1994).

⁵Herring, 304.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Harold Moore and Joseph Galloway, *We Were Soldiers Once . . . And Young: Ia Drang, the Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1992), 27-8.

⁸Ibid., 307.

⁹Harold Moore, *After Action Report IA DRANG Valley Operation 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 14-16 November 1965*. Headquarter 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry APO San Francisco, CA 96490, 1.

¹⁰Harold Moore, *1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Operations Order for LZ X-RAY*. Plei Me, RVN, 140845 Nov 1965, 1.

¹¹Harold Moore and Joseph Galloway, *We Were Soldiers Once . . . And Young: Ia Drang, the Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam* (New York, NY: Random House, 1992), 72-73.

¹²Moore, *After Action Report*, 5.

¹³Moore and Galloway, 224.

¹⁴Moore, *After Action Report*, 18.

¹⁵Harold Moore, "Author's Biography" [Online] Available from <http://www.lzxray.com/battle>: Internet accessed 17 September 2002.

¹⁶Moore and Galloway, 18-19.

¹⁷Dave Oliver, Jr., RADM USN (ret), *LEAD ON! A Practical Approach to Leadership* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992), 167.

¹⁸Yellin.

¹⁹Owen Connelly, *On War and Leadership: The Words of Combat Commanders from Frederick the Great to Norman Schwarzkopf* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 215.

²⁰Moore and Galloway, 20.

²¹Ibid.

²²Harold Moore, "Battlefield Leadership" [Online] Available from <http://www.lzxray.com/battle>: Internet accessed 17 September 2002.

²³Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC, 31 August 1999), 2-21.

²⁴Moore and Galloway, 63, 443.

²⁵John Keegan, *The Mask of Command*. (New York, NY: Penguin, 1987), 320.

²⁶Harold Moore, [Online] Available from <http://www.weweresoldiers.com>: Internet accessed 12 November 2002.

²⁷William F. Jasper, "The Real Hal Moore: An interview of Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore" [Online] Available from <http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna>: Internet accessed 17 September 2002.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Moore and Galloway, 88.

³⁰Moore and Galloway, 191.

³¹John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York, NY: Penguin, 1976), 18.

³²Ibid., 44.

³³Yellin.

³⁴Moore and Galloway, 127.

³⁵Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, 329.

³⁶Harold Moore, "Battlefield Leadership." [Online] Available from <http://www.lzxray.com/battle>: Internet accessed 17 September 2002.

³⁷Yellin.

³⁸Harold Moore, "Battlefield Leadership." [Online] Available from <http://www.lzxray.com/battle>: Internet accessed 17 September 2002.

CHAPTER 3

WILLPOWER AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

A Study of the Methods of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz

ADM Nimitz, the professional naval officer, knew how to get
the optimum performance from his major weapon, men.¹
-CDR Hal Lamar, USNR, (Ret.) aide to FADM Nimitz

Admiral Nimitz's leadership in the Pacific theater during World War II is well suited to a study of willpower at the operational level of war. He displayed an ability to continue in the face of adversity following a string of crushing defeats and retreats early in the war. He refused to accept failure, and certainly possessed the power to affect a desired outcome in others. No attempt will be made to comprehensively retell the story of World War II in the vast Pacific theater (see Figure 5 below which depicts the boundaries of Admiral Nimitz's area of responsibility) and the author assumes the possession of some historical knowledge by the reader. Rather, this chapter will use relevant historical examples in the hope of illuminating the methods Admiral Nimitz used to generate and transmit his willpower.

In order to adequately analyze Admiral Nimitz's methods this chapter will cover selected portions of his early life and his naval career, up to and including his tenure as the Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT) and his concurrent position as the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA). The look at his early life will provide an insight into the genesis of his willpower. Various anecdotes will provide the reader with examples of how Admiral Nimitz learned to transmit his willpower in his early career and provide parallels with how he chose to transmit his willpower later as CINCPAC. These vignettes have been selected due to their relevance to the primary

research question: how does a leader generate willpower and transmit it to others to create a desired effect? Specifically, evidence will be provided that will illustrate how Admiral Nimitz's upbringing served to shape his personality, how he cultivated and communicated his vision to his subordinates, selection or removal of key subordinates, and how his innovation all led directly to his successful willpower transmission as CINCPAC/CINCPAC.

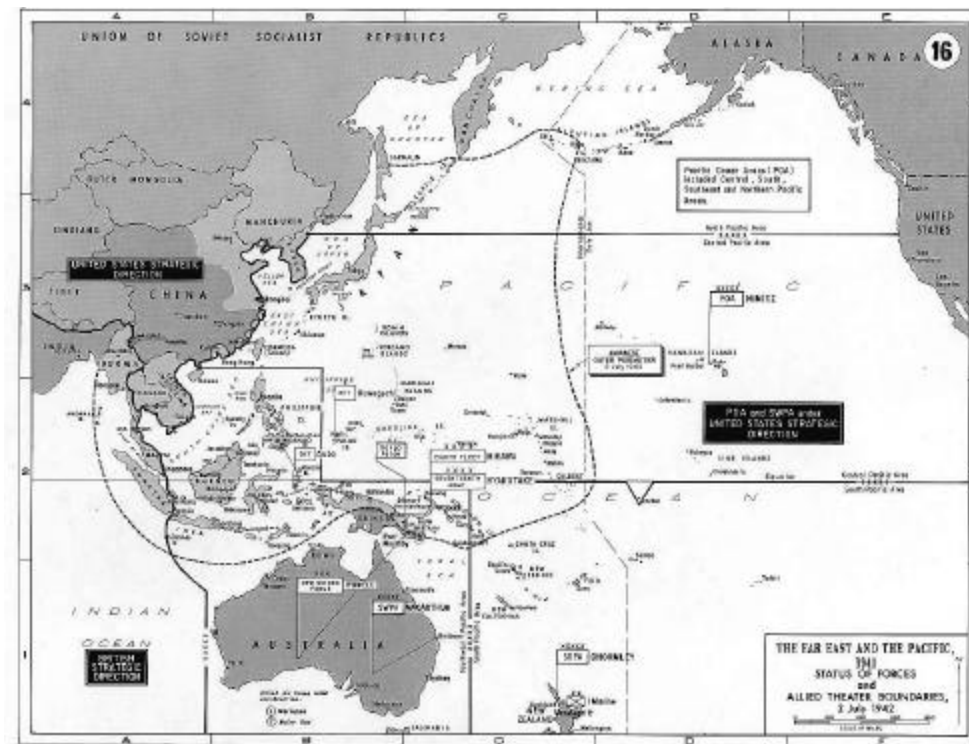


Figure 5: Pacific Theater Command Areas. Downloaded from http://www.military.com/resources/worldwar2_asia_maps_map16 on 19 Jan 03.

Historical Setting

War came with the dawn to a politically divided and only partially prepared United States on 7 December 1941. Following the surprise Sunday morning attack by carrier based planes of the Imperial Japanese Navy, the United States Pacific fleet had suffered a terrific blow. Five capital ships had been sunk or were sinking, eight cruisers and destroyers were sunk or heavily damaged, more than one hundred Army Air Corps, Marine Corps or Navy planes had been smashed on the ground, and almost 2,400 servicemen were slain.² What did remain under the rising columns of black smoke was a shocked military garrison headed by demoralized leadership. As Admiral Husband Kimmel, the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), watched his fleet burn, a spent .50 caliber bullet smashed through his window and struck him in the chest. Picking the slug up off the floor he quietly remarked, “Too bad it didn’t kill me.”³

Quickly following this victory, Japanese military forces enjoyed a series of rapid and highly successful operations that overran or destroyed military forces of the United States, Great Britain and Holland all across the Western Pacific Region. By 23 December America’s only outpost within striking distance of Japan, Wake Island, had also fallen and the naval task force that had been sent to relieve the garrison on the island had been recalled without firing a shot. The effect of this string of defeats and retreats on the morale of American forces was as damaging as the initial attack on that fateful Sunday morning. Upon returning to Washington, DC, from Pearl Harbor on a presidential mission at the end of December 1941, a retired fleet admiral exclaimed, “By God, I used

to say a man had to be both a fighter and know how to fight. Now all I want is a man who fights.”⁴

President Franklin D. Roosevelt had reached the same conclusion and had already picked his fighter. On 16 December President Roosevelt instructed Navy Secretary Knox, “Tell Nimitz to get the hell out to Pearl and stay there until the war is won.”⁵ Admiral Nimitz stayed in the Pacific until the end of World War II. The final victorious outcome for the United States, well known to every student of history, was very much in doubt following Admiral Nimitz’s arrival in Pearl Harbor on Christmas morning 1941. As his seaplane taxied, the harbor was still covered with oil and launches moved carefully among the smoking, blacken hulks searching for bodies that periodically floated to the surface.⁶ There was much work to be done.

Nimitz’s Willpower Genesis

Chester William Nimitz was born in Fredericksburg, Texas, on 24 February 1885. His mother, Anna Henke, was one of the two primary influences on his young life. She had been married in March 1884 to Chester Bernard Nimitz, the son of the local hotel owner, and five months later was widowed and pregnant.⁷ The second great influence on the future fleet admiral’s life was his “wonderful white-bearded” paternal grandfather, Captain Charles Henry Nimitz. Recently widowed himself, Grandfather Nimitz accepted his daughter-in-law and her infant son into his home to help fill the void in his life as well as run his steamboat-shaped hotel. Captain Nimitz had served in the German merchant marine before settling in Texas. He beguiled his grandson with specious sea stories of how, since he had turned his back on the sea, he could never take another sea journey because the jealous sea would swallow him up.

In time, Captain Nimitz's youngest son, William, married Chester's mother and William became stepfather, as well as uncle, and young Chester kept his last name. However, William never had the same influence on Chester, as did his grandfather. After Grandfather Nimitz returned safely from a sea voyage, Chester inquired how the sea had not swallowed him up. Grandfather Nimitz replied, "He had begged forgiveness and promised to give the sea one of my grandsons-as an admiral."⁸

Growing up in Fredericksburg, Chester Nimitz split wood, worked in the Nimitz family hotel and the Henke family butcher shop, and studied hard in the time remaining. In the summer of 1900, two recently graduated West Pointers stayed in the hotel. The most important thing about these two Army officers to Nimitz's eye was the fact that they were not much older than him. He realized that he could also go to West Point and escape the drudgery of his daily chores. Shortly thereafter he applied to West Point and was refused admittance due to capacity enrollment. He quickly applied to Annapolis and was started on the path joking prophesied by his Grandfather that eventually led him to Pearl Harbor. His biographer E. B. Potter has summarized Nimitz's early life and career as follows:

Nimitz had spent his whole life preparing for the post of CINCPAC. He was, probably as much as any commander in history, a self-created officer. Evidence suggests that, observing the qualities of commanders under whom he served, he conceived the image of an ideal officer and consciously molded himself to conform to that image.⁹

The quiet, hard working, and responsible example of his mother is something Nimitz's actions prove he emulated throughout his life. The nautical influence of his grandfather kindled a love of the sea in a boy from the Texas prairie. Together these influences served to shape his personality into a megaphone for his willpower

transmission. In his day-to-day life, Nimitz proved that the best way to get someone's attention is to lower your voice. Nimitz's method of willpower transmission was through quiet unassuming confidence and honest hard work, not vainglorious exclamation nor thunderous exhortation.

Cultivating and Communicating Vision

Niccolo Machiavelli said, "Fortune favors the prepared man." When then Commander Nimitz received orders to the Naval War College in the spring of 1922, he viewed this as his opportunity to prepare himself. He later called his time at Newport as "One of the truly important assignments of my career."¹⁰ The course of instruction then focused on what strategic thinkers thought the most likely scenario for future conflict: a war with Japan in the Pacific. Nearly forty years after his graduation, Nimitz recalled that the courses were so thorough that, "after the start of World War II, nothing that happened in the Pacific was strange or unexpected."¹¹

While Admiral Nimitz may have been prepared, he also faced daunting challenges that had the potential of preventing him from bringing his vision to fruition.¹² There was a grim reality portrayed by the simple change of command ceremony that took place on the narrow deck of the submarine *Grayling* on 31 December 1941. Admiral Nimitz as a submariner did not request the location; there simply was not a larger undamaged warship available in Pearl Harbor following the attack of 7 December. Admiral Nimitz wasted no time in making his intentions known to his subordinates. On the pier immediately following the ceremony, Admiral Nimitz addressed the assembled senior officers of his staff. He stated, "We have taken a tremendous wallop...but I have not doubt of the ultimate outcome." He summarized his immediate plans as follows, "Bide

your time, keep your powder dry, and take advantage of the opportunity when it's offered."¹³

While Admiral Nimitz was aware of the presence of reporters during his comments noted above, and had tailored the content to be vague enough for public consumption, he was equally prompt in addressing his staff in private. Later that same day he called them together for a conference. It would be hard to imagine a more somber group. Collectively and individually, these professional naval officers felt responsible for the failure to adequately defend the fleet from the crushing Japanese attack just three weeks prior. Tainted with this disgrace, they feared the worst. Admiral Nimitz quickly electrified the group, but in an unexpected manner. Disregarding the suggestion of his superior Admiral King to "rid Pearl Harbor of pessimist and defeatist," Nimitz announced that he had complete confidence in all of them and intended to keep the staff intact.¹⁴ Further, as the former head of the Bureau of Navigation (later renamed the Bureau of Personnel to more clearly portray its function), he personally knew of their competence and for that reason they had been assigned to the CINCPAC staff. The morale of the staff instantly increased.¹⁵

Admiral Nimitz's motivation for keeping the staff intact is clear. While reviewing the damage report following the attack while in route to Hawaii, Admiral Nimitz sympathetically remarked, "It could have happened to anyone."¹⁶ This inspired decision had an immediate positive impact on his staff. By improving the morale of his subordinates he encouraged them to continue their work despite the adversity of the early days of the war. This reflected his staff, and his own, commitment to continue in the face of adversity, the first component of willpower. This decision reflected his refusal to

accept failure in the form of a staff that blamed themselves for past mistakes, the second component of willpower. The immediate spike in morale undoubtedly had a positive effect on the work product of the staff as a whole. This was the desired effect of his decision and reflected the third component of willpower. While this decision took immense courage on his part (very few naval officers disregarded suggestions from Admiral King), it was not a permanent arrangement. In the due course of time, almost the entire staff was rotated to other assignments as was appropriate.

Admiral Nimitz's decision to retain his staff following the attack on Pearl Harbor paid handsome dividends. Two of the staff officers saved from the expected purge produced tangible results instrumental to future American victories. Commander Joseph Rochefort was the cryptological analyst that broke the Japanese Naval code, JN-25.¹⁷ This breakthrough allowed CINCPAC to read secret Japanese radio messages and provided invaluable assistance in determining future operations. Using this information, Commander Edward Layton, the fleet intelligence officer, was able to predict nearly the exact date, time and location that American scout planes would spot Japanese carrier task forces on their way to attack the American base on the island of Midway.¹⁸ Armed with the tactical advantage this information provided, the U.S. Navy was prepared for the stunning success that Military Historian John Keegan has called, "one of the few truly crucial 'moments of decision' which can be isolated in the whole course of warfare."¹⁹ A clear indication of his value to Admiral Nimitz, Commander Layton was the only original member of the CINCPAC staff to serve in his billet throughout the war.

In another move that increased the efficiency of his staff, Admiral Nimitz expanded on his bland public statement of 'taking advantage of the opportunity when

presented.’ He clearly stated to his staff the objectives for naval operations after taking command as follows: to restore morale, which had reached rock bottom following the failure to relieve Wake Island; to hold the line against further Japanese expansion in the Pacific; to assure the safety of communications to Hawaii, Midway, and Australia; to divert Japanese strength away from the Dutch East Indies. Admiral Nimitz believed that he could best accomplish his objectives by offensively employing the Pacific Fleet.²⁰

Admiral Nimitz went further than to just publish his priorities. He encouraged debate among his staff on how to best implement strategy. Give and take discussion allowed numerous ideas to be brought to his attention and for members of his staff to provide their input. This management style was in stark contrast to his predecessor who had a more aloof, imperious style. The change in atmosphere was welcome to the CINCPAC staff. As Admiral Spruance observed, it was like “being in a stuffy room and having someone open a window and let in a breath of fresh air.”²¹

This approach was more than just an enlightened management style used by Admiral Nimitz: it was his signature method of willpower transmission. This philosophy allowed Admiral Nimitz to benefit from the combined experience of his grateful staff and for potential operations to be more fully vetted before he made his final decision. In addition to a higher-quality finished product, by allowing all of the staff to participate, they all became fully committed to the final decision. This method produced a unified staff that all believe in the concept of the operational plan and they were broadly knowledgeable of their individual role in its completion. This approach motivated and united staff represented Admiral Nimitz’s ultimate goal. His open management style was how he produced a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower.

Having a management style that encouraged his subordinate officers to share their views should not be confused with a committee where the majority ruled. After making up his mind, Admiral Nimitz would leave no doubt as to who was in charge. The decision to attack Kwajalein during the drive across the central Pacific is a revealing example.

The plan of record in the late fall of 1943 was to attack the atoll of Kwajalein following the invasion of Tarawa. However, the invasion of Tarawa was much more costly in terms of casualties than anticipated. When the casualty figures were released, there was a public outcry, much of it directed personally at Admiral Nimitz. The discussion among his staff was for a more cautious approach to the objective. Admiral Nimitz polled his staff and they all favored attacking an outer island prior to invading Kwajalein. Following a brief pause, Admiral Nimitz replied, "Well gentlemen, our next objective will be Kwajalein."²²

The meeting was adjourned and the staff departed. The senior commanders, Admiral Spruance, Admiral Turner, and General Smith, who were designated to lead the Kwajalein invasion stayed behind. They again implored Admiral Nimitz to reconsider his decision, referring to the plan as dangerous and reckless. Admiral Nimitz patiently heard them all out and replied,

Sitting behind desks in the United States are able officers who would give their right arms to be out here fighting the war. If you gentlemen can't bring yourselves to carry out my orders, I can arrange an exchange of duty...make up your minds. You have five minutes.²³

None of the senior officers took Admiral Nimitz up on his offer to 'arrange an exchange of duty' and they executed his orders. The invasion of Kwajalein proceeded as planned and was successful. One of the reasons may have been that the Japanese high command

was as surprised by the decision as Admiral Nimitz's subordinate commanders were. In any case, this example clearly shows that Admiral Nimitz possessed a strong resolve. Having decided on the correct path, he certainly had the power to affect the desirable outcome in his subordinates. This reflects his use of the third component of willpower: the power to affect a desired outcome in others.

Selection or Removal of Subordinates

Critical to the efficient operation of any large organization is the appointment of fully qualified personnel to key positions. In directing the execution of the Pacific war, Admiral Nimitz handpicked a majority of the senior military commanders who were his subordinates. Drawing on his past experience as the head of the Navy's personnel directorate, he knew the records and reputations of nearly all of the senior officers. He used this experience to his advantage when selecting his key subordinates or when removing them.

By 1943, the US Pacific Fleet had expanded due to the rapid, wartime ship construction program. This expanding fleet would require a reorganized command structure. At Nimitz's recommendation, Admiral King, the Chief of Naval Operations, approved Admiral Spruance's appointment to lead the newly formed 5th Fleet.

Following the Battle of Midway, Nimitz brought Admiral Raymond Spruance to Hawaii to serve as the CINCPAC chief of staff. As Nimitz's alter ego and primary sounding board, as well as housemate at Makalapa, Admiral Spruance worked closely with CINCPAC. This exposure allowed Admiral Nimitz to observe Admiral Spruance's thought process and come to respect his judgment. It also provided Admiral Nimitz with the opportunity to fully inculcate Admiral Spruance with his strategic goals and the

desired means to achieve those goals. Other members of the CINCPAC staff observed this conditioning process. “The Admiral thinks it’s alright to send Raymond out now,” observed one staff officer from Nimitz’s headquarters. “He’s got him to the point where they think and talk alike.”²⁴

Admiral Spruance went on to achieve success in command of the 5th Fleet. While it may appear to be a short cut in willpower transmission, the selection of like-minded key subordinate is shrewd. Clearly a subordinate who understands how a leader thinks and by what set of priorities a leader reaches a decision is more inclined to conduct operations in accordance with his superior’s expectations. This invariably made Admiral Nimitz’s willpower transmission task far simpler to accomplish. The inculcation process was Admiral Nimitz’s method for producing the desired effect in his subordinate, and represents the third component of willpower: the power to affect a desired outcome in others.

When Admiral Spruance reported to CINCPAC as chief of staff, he replaced Vice Admiral Ghormley who became the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force (COMSOPAC) based in New Caledonia. VADM Ghormley’s new command was subordinate to Admiral Nimitz in his capacity as CINCPAC/CINCPOA. Unfortunately, Vice Admiral Ghormley did not have success at his new command. Following continued poor results, Admiral Nimitz and several members of his staff visited for conferences and to investigate the status of operations and future plans. Upon return to Pearl Harbor Admiral Nimitz polled his staff for their impressions. Unanimously they recommended VADM Ghormley’s replacement. Admiral Nimitz ordered Admiral Halsey to immediately relieve VADM Ghormley.²⁵ The insertion of Admiral Halsey came at a high

price because it otherwise employed Admiral Nimitz's most experienced carrier admiral. However, with Admiral Halsey in command, COMSOPAC produced the desired results in the Battle for Guadalcanal and throughout the Solomon Islands campaign.

Following his relief, VADM Ghormley passed through Hawaii on the way to his next posting. Feeling he had been betrayed and humiliated by his former boss, he requested a private meeting with Admiral Nimitz. Respectfully, but clearly showing his resentment, VADM Ghormley asked for an explanation. "Bob," replied Admiral Nimitz, "I had to pick from the whole Navy the man best fitted to handle the situation. Were you that man?" VADM Ghormley replied that he was not, that he understood the decision that Admiral Nimitz had made, and that he appreciated the explanation.²⁶

The decision to relieve a peer was gut wrenching for Admiral Nimitz and is in sharp contrast to his decision to retain the CINCPAC staff following the debacle of the attack on 7 December 1941. However, his ability to make this decision displays his deep-seated refusal to accept failure and shows his use of the second component of willpower. These two examples illustrate how Admiral Nimitz used the selection of, and when necessary the replacement of, key personnel to aid in his willpower transmission.

Willpower and Innovation

Even a cursory study of Admiral Nimitz's early career will reveal he was an innovator in the field of naval warfare. Following command of three submarines, he was invited to deliver a paper to the Naval War College on submarine tactics due to his well-deserved reputation as an expert in this field.²⁷ In 1913 Admiral Nimitz was sent by the Navy to Germany to study the emerging technology of diesel engines and later used this knowledge while supervising the construction of the Navy's first diesel powered oiler

Maumee and served as her Chief Engineer.²⁸ While still onboard the *Maumee*, he helped pioneer the practice of refueling warships while underway that enabled the fleet to extend the duration of operations on the high seas.²⁹ In 1923 as the Tactical Officer for the Battle Fleet Commander, then Commander Nimitz instituted the revolutionary circular formation for fleet operations and advocated complete integration of submarines and aircraft carriers. Both of these innovations were standard in the fleet during World War II but were at the cutting edge of naval thought in the early 1920s.³⁰

While at CINCPAC his penchant for innovation continued. By the spring of 1944, the tide of the Pacific war was running strongly in the favor of America and her allies. Admiral Nimitz quickly grasped that the U.S. Navy need no longer fear its enemy and should accelerate the pace of operations. Following the successful raids on the Japanese stronghold on the island of Rabaul, he boldly stated, "Henceforth, we propose to give the Japs no rest."³¹ In order to deal with the accelerating pace of planned operations, Admiral Nimitz instituted an ingenious two-platoon command system. Under this system Admiral Spruance, then in charge of the 5th Fleet and his key staff officers would be replaced by Admiral Halsey with another complete command team of staff officers. The ships that made up the fleet would stay forward deployed and the entire organization would be renamed the 3rd Fleet reflecting Admiral Halsey commanding.

The advantage of this system is that the 3rd Fleet staff officers would be able to rest and devote time to planning the next operation while the 5th Fleet was conducting operations. Following 5th Fleets operations the roles would be reversed. As Admiral Halsey observed, "Instead of the old stagecoach system of keeping the drivers and changing the horses, we changed the drivers and kept the horses. It was hard on the

horses, but it was effective.’³² The system had the added benefit of confusing Japanese intelligence officers trying to determine which American task force was which (5th or 3rd), what their composition and strength was, and where they would be operating next. Further, this system prevented the physical exhaustion of Admiral Nimitz’s key subordinate commanders. It is likely Admiral Nimitz painfully recalled his consternation on the eve of the Battle of Midway when physical exhaustion, caused by prolonged months at sea, had landed Admiral Halsey in the hospital. This system would prevent the loss of a key commander at a crucial time in the same manner.

This two-platoon command system was utilized successfully for over a year in the Pacific theater. An intelligent naval officer who was flexible in his thinking, Admiral Nimitz was not afraid to institute a radically new idea, even during the conduct of a major war that encompassed the breadth of the world’s largest ocean. This ability gave him another way to positively affect a desired outcome in his subordinates. The two-platoon command system kept both of his key subordinates, Admirals Spruance and Halsey, well rested and gainfully employed. In this manner he used the third component of willpower, producing a desired outcome in others.

This chapter has focused on the methods by which Admiral Nimitz transmitted his willpower to his subordinates in order to affect the desired outcome, victory at the operational level of war in the Pacific. Insight was provided into the genesis of Admiral Nimitz’s willpower. Discussion was provided in how he overcame the adversity that was a direct result of the Pearl Harbor attack and reinvigorated the CINCPAC staff and refused to accept failure. He utilized methods that increased his subordinate’s chances of success and made the most of his precious resources. He made his tasks easier by

carefully selecting key subordinates or replacing them when they were measured and found wanting. Further, a discussion was provided to illuminate how Admiral Nimitz's management style as CINCPAC had a direct, positive impact on the successful operation of his staff. All of these methods represent willpower transmission techniques at the operational level of war and were calculated by Admiral Nimitz to get the optimum performance from his men.

¹Lou Reda, prod., *ADM Chester W. Nimitz – Thunder of the Pacific*. (New York: A&E TV Network, 1996).

²John Keegan, *The Price of Admiralty - The Evolution of Naval Warfare* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 207.

³E. B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976), 17.

⁴Keegan, 209-10.

⁵Potter, 9.

⁶Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York, NY: Vintage Books a division of Random House, 1985), 147.

⁷Keegan, 26.

⁸*Ibid.*, 24.

⁹*Ibid.*, 21-22.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 136.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Captain Steele, *Running Estimate and Summary*. CINCPACFLT War Plans from 7 December 1941 to 31 August 1942. Declassified WWII Records available on microfilm.

¹³_____. [Online] Pacific Fleet Change of Command, 31 December 1941. Available at the Naval Historical Center website, www.history.mil/wwii-pac: Internet accessed 14 November 2002.

¹⁴Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York, NY: Vintage Books a division of Random House, 1985), 147.

¹⁵Potter, 21.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁹Keegan., 241.

²⁰E.B. Potter and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, *Triumph in the Pacific-The Navy's Struggle Against Japan* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963), 11.

²¹Potter, 34.

²²*Ibid.*, 265.

²³Oliver Warner, *Command at Sea: Great Fighting Admirals from Hawke to Nimitz*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1976), 198-9.

²⁴Warner, 198.

²⁵Potter, 199.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*, 117-8.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 122, 125.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 129.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 138-142.

³¹Ronald Andidora. *Iron Admirals: Naval Leadership in the Twentieth Century* (Greenwood Press: Westport, CT, 2000), 122.

³²Potter, 294.

CHAPTER 4

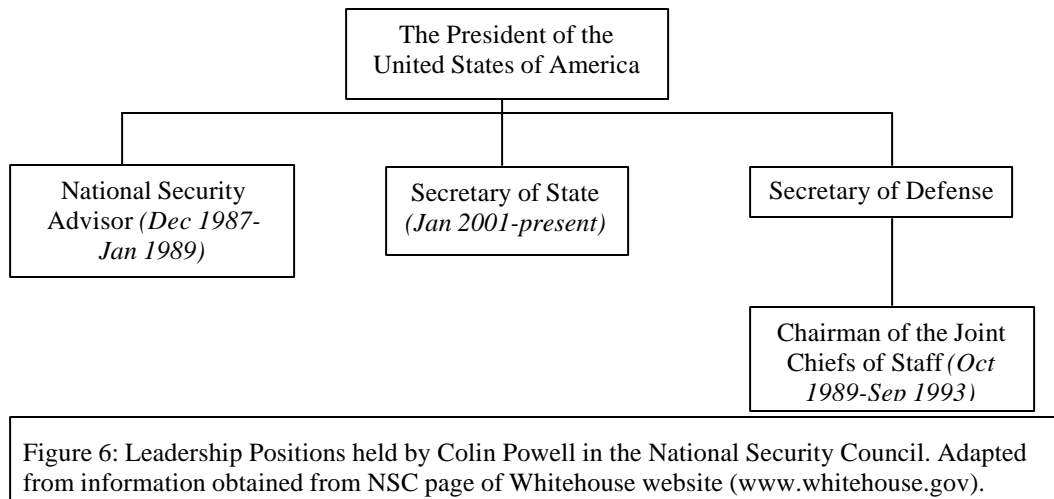
WILLPOWER AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL OF WAR

A Study of the Methods of General Colin L. Powell

Of all the manifestations of power, restraint impresses men most.
-Thucydides, (c. 470-400 BC)¹

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell may be one of the most influential soldier-statesmen in our nation's history. Comparisons to George Washington, George C. Marshall, or Dwight Eisenhower, all of whom had distinguished military careers leading to further service and accomplishment as civilians, are easy to make. Clearly he has had a large impact on the formulation and implementation of American foreign policy, and the military's role in that policy, during the past fifteen years. Colin Powell is a career Army officer who retired as a four star general with thirty-five years of active service. He has held the key positions of National Security Advisor (NSA), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and his current position as Secretary of State. All three positions are defined by joint doctrine to be at the strategic level of war.²

Colin Powell has occupied three of the eight positions in the National Security Council (NSC, see Figure 6 below).³ The NSC is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials. The NSC also serves as the President's primary arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies, with the NSA primarily responsible for this coordination.⁴



General Powell will serve as the focal point for the study of willpower transmission at the strategic level of war. How was he able to generate his willpower and transmit it to his subordinates and others in order to have a desired effect while serving in these positions? Bearing the heavy weight of responsibility that these positions bring with them, General Powell would require a large, personal well of resolve and determination to overcome a myriad of challenges. The intractable nature of many of the issues he successfully dealt with would test his determination and perseverance. By continuing in the face of these adversities, refusing to accept failure, and having the power to affect a desired outcome in others and his subordinates, General Powell has expertly exhibited all of the characteristics of willpower as defined in this thesis.

This chapter will provide an in depth study of the willpower transmission techniques applied successfully by the subject. A brief background and biographical sketch will be provided as well as examples and analysis of the willpower transmission

techniques employed by Colin Powell from the three key leadership positions described above: National Security Advisor to the President (NSA), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and Secretary of State.

Background and Biographical Sketch

Colin Luther Powell was born on 5 April 1937 in Harlem, the poorest of the five boroughs of New York City.⁵ His mother and father were both Jamaican immigrants; his father arrived in Philadelphia in 1920 onboard a United Fruit Company banana boat. His hard-working parents believed the way for their children to achieve the American dream was through hard work and educational achievement.⁶

Considering the importance his parents placed on education, it is ironic that young Colin was an indifferent student. His classes did not hold his attention and his C-average in school seems to be more a result of a lack of effort or direction than ability. Growing up during World War II and the Korean War, Powell was strongly influenced by the Second World War and the Korean Conflict. He clearly remembers the small service banners with blue or gold stars in the apartment windows of his neighborhood during the war years. This experience may have predisposed him to join the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at City College of New York (CCNY), where he enrolled as a freshman in the fall of 1954. He states he was attracted to “the discipline, the structure, the camaraderie, and the sense of belonging.”⁷ His grades improved in this environment and his cadet leader performance was exemplary. The military provided the meaning that had been lacking in his youth. This convinced him that “he wanted to be a soldier.”⁸

Upon graduation with a degree in geology, Colin Powell was commissioned as a regular officer due to his status as a “Distinguished Military Graduate.” Second

Lieutenant Powell completed the Infantry Officer Basic Course in the top ten of his class and went on to complete Airborne, Ranger, and Pathfinder training.⁹ This training placed him at the top of the pyramid of all infantry officers, the elite of the elite.

General Powell gained combat experience early in his career. He served in Vietnam as a military advisor and received the Purple Heart after being wounded by a Viet Cong booby trap.¹⁰ Returning from Vietnam, he completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, graduated as the highest ranked infantryman in his class, and was selected to instruct at this course.¹¹ He was promoted early, before his peers, to the rank of major and graduated second in his class from the Army's Command and General Staff Officers Course (CGSC).¹² He returned to Vietnam for a second tour. The division commander handpicked then-Major Powell over several more senior officers, to serve as the division operations and plans officer (G-3), a position is normally filled by a lieutenant colonel.¹³

As Colin Powell began to move up the chain of command, he began translating his personal achievement into his unit's achievement by creating a 'culture of excellence.' A prime example of this can be seen from General Powell's battalion command tour. Then-Lieutenant Colonel Powell was the commander of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, of the 2nd Division stationed in Korea. His battalion qualified more soldiers for the prestigious Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB) than the other three battalions in the regiment combined.¹⁴ One of his soldiers was selected as the divisional Soldier of the Month (an honor recognizing the superior performance, bearing and knowledge of an individual) for five consecutive months.¹⁵ By creating a culture of excellence, Colin Powell had made success into an organizational habit.

These accomplishments are examples of Colin Powell's successful use of the third component of willpower: affecting a desired outcome in others. He explains his ability to increase the performance of his troops by stating, "A good commander could motivate his men to excel under any circumstances...leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible."¹⁶ Colin Powell's culture of excellence, and successful willpower transmission, propelled him to the top of the military hierarchy.

In the second half of his career, General Powell's assignments fell into a pattern that alternated between command of troops in the field and assignments in political positions outside the mainstream of a normal Army career. Examples of these assignments included: selection as a White House fellow; attendance at the National War College; military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. These positions prepared him to assume responsibility at the highest levels of government. A study of his willpower transmission at the strategic level will begin with an example from his tenure at the National Security Council (NSC).

Willpower Transmission while at the NSC

In the fall of 1986, then Lieutenant General Powell was content. He had a job that suited all of his aspirations: Commanding General of V Corps in Germany. He had recently 'escaped' a job in Washington and was back in the field for five months leading troops when the phone rang. It was the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. He was calling to personally express his desire for General Powell to give up his post and come back to Washington DC to serve as the Deputy Assistant to the President for

National Security Affairs (NSA) and, “help Frank Carlucci straighten out the mess at the NSC.”¹⁷

The mess he was referring to was the Iran-Contra affair: an illegal NSC operation of selling overpriced weapons to Iran, a terrorist nation that the President had publicly stated he would never do business with, and secretly using the profits to finance the controversial Contra insurgency in Nicaragua. When the details became public knowledge, the scandal had precipitated the firing of the previous National Security Advisor (NSA), Admiral Poindexter. The new NSA was to be Frank Carlucci, who General Powell had worked with previously at the Department of Defense.¹⁸

When General Powell reported for his first day of duty as the new Deputy National Security Advisor, he realized there was much work to be done. Powell described the situation at the NSC as, “Similar to taking over a demoralized battalion where the commanding officer has just been relieved, or inheriting a losing team after the coach has been fired.”¹⁹ The NSC was disorganized, had lost credibility, and was not achieving its mission of coordinating a unified policy within the cabinet.²⁰

To bring order out of chaos, General Powell sought to organize how national foreign policy issues were formulated. With the approval of his new boss, the National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci, he formed the Policy Review Group (PRG). This group was chaired by General Powell and was comprised of subcabinet level officials from the State Department, the Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Central Intelligence Agency. The PRG was where ‘the rubber met the road’ for the formulation and coordination of foreign policy within the different departments of the executive branch. Under General Powell’s leadership and direction, the PRG recommendations

were briefed to the NSA and approved by the President, and became American foreign policy.²¹

The first major crisis that the PRG tackled and authored foreign policy was the Persian Gulf. Early in 1987, the continuing war between Iran and Iraq threatened to stop the flow of oil through the Persian Gulf. Oil is the lifeblood of the world's economy and the United States considers the stability of this region to be of vital national interest. Failure on the part of the PRG or the NSC on this issue was simply not an option.

Instituting a policy coordinated within the NSC, the United States advised the nation of Kuwait that it was willing to place Kuwaiti oil tankers under United States protection. By reflagging the tankers as United States ships, and by placing US Navy ships on patrol within the Persian Gulf to protect the tankers, a clear, unified, foreign policy message was created. This policy proposal was in keeping with the International Laws of the Sea, and was understood and agreed to by all of the representatives of the PRG. The stated goal of this policy was to keep the sea-lanes open to keep the oil flowing through the Persian Gulf in spite of the continuing war. Meeting the approval of the various departments, and the NSA, this policy was approved by the President and was briefed to Congress.²²

This example illustrates General Powell's willpower transmission at the strategic level of war while he was serving at the National Security Council (NSC). He inherited a dysfunctional and disheartened staff as the Deputy NSA following the Iran-Contra affair. He overcame the adversity that this situation represented, displaying the first component of willpower. He refused to accept the failure that an interruption in oil flow through the Persian Gulf would have represented, the second component of willpower. He helped to

produce a coherent national foreign policy, the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers, that kept oil flowing through the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war. The approval of this foreign policy by the President and Congress illustrates General Powell's capacity to affect a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower.

General Powell served as the deputy NSA for ten months. When Frank Carlucci was selected as the next Secretary of Defense, General Powell was nominated to succeed him. At his confirmation hearing, Senator John Warner (R-VA) praised "the unusual distinction that this fine officer has brought to the nation and himself."²³ During his tenure as the National Security Advisor (NSA), General Powell coordinated foreign policy and prepared the President for several arms control summits with Mikhail Gorbachev at the end of the Cold War. These summits led to the elimination of Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) missiles, the first time in history an entire class of nuclear weapons had been eliminated, and a definite warming of relations between the former superpower adversaries. The changed relationship would affect the nature of his willpower transmission later in his career as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Willpower Transmission while CJCS

Following the election of George H. W. Bush as President in 1988, General Powell was again allowed to escape Washington and go back to the regular Army. He was promoted to four-star rank and selected to head Forces Command (FORSCOM). FORSCOM is in charge of all 250,000 active duty Army soldiers in the continental United States, as well as the 250,000 reservists, and presides over the training of the 500,000 National Guardsmen.²⁴ After eight months he had adjusted to the slower pace of life when he received a call from Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. He was to be

nominated to become the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). The CJCS is the senior officer in the United States military and is the principal military advisor to the President and the Secretary of Defense. General Powell would have a busy tenure as the Chairman.

On 26 July 1990, eighty thousand Iraqi Republican Guard soldiers crossed the border and invaded its smaller, southern neighbor of Kuwait. The entire country was quickly overrun and the Iraqi forces were positioned to possibly invade Saudi Arabia. While there had been intelligence indications of a military buildup, the intentions of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had been misjudged. Consequently, the United States was very late in determining that Hussein intended to invade and was militarily unprepared to deter or prevent the invasion.²⁵ This would prove to be the largest test General Powell would face as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

As a result of being caught unprepared by this crisis, it took time for the military to react and the administration to formulate a policy. By October 1990, the military had moved adequate forces into the Middle East to defend Saudi Arabia from possible Iraqi invasion. Over the intervening months the public and the politicians were starting to become impatient. The question soon became what to do about Kuwait. Political pressure for the military to 'do something' was increasing.

In order to show the President what the military could do at that time, General Powell called General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of Central Command (CENTCOM), and asked him to prepare an offensive military plan to eject the Republican Guard forcibly from Kuwait. General Schwarzkopf replied, "I got no goddamn offensive plan because I haven't got the ground forces."²⁶ General Powell was

aware that adequate forces were not yet in theater, but insisted that a plan showing what could be done with the forces present was needed for the President immediately.

The reaction to the plan was predictable to both generals: it was considered deficient. The Secretary of Defense remarked, “I may be a layman, but that strategy disappointed me.”²⁷ One senior administration official wisecracked after the briefing that “General McClellan lives” in reference to the Union Civil War general who was reluctant to engage Southern forces no matter how many troops President Lincoln provided to him.²⁸ General Powell quickly explained that this was not the best possible product, and that given more time and more forces, a better product would be revealed.

From his office the next day, General Powell again called General Schwarzkopf. He intentionally repeated the McClellan remark when describing the reaction to General Schwarzkopf’s inchoate plan. General Powell had known General Schwarzkopf for years; they had served in Vietnam together as military advisors. General Powell was well aware of what General Schwarzkopf’s reaction would be. The CENTCOM Commander exploded, “You tell me which son of a bitch said that. I’ll show them the difference between Schwarzkopf and McClellan!”²⁹

General Powell was taking advantage of this opportunity and was using it as a willpower transmission technique. He had intentionally baited General Schwarzkopf, and the Chairman felt a little guilty. “I had deliberately shoved the bayonet between his ribs to goad him into thinking harder about our ground offensive plan.”³⁰ Shortly after this prodding, General Powell flew to Saudi Arabia to confer with the CENTCOM Commander and his staff. Working together, a new strategy for the ground offensive was devised and they determined an adequate force structure to execute this plan. General

Powell also sought to reassure his subordinate after so effectively rattling his cage.

“Norm, you’ve got to understand that the President and Cheney will give you anything you need to get the job done. We’re not going off half-cocked.”³¹ The new and improved plan, the required force structure and timetable, were briefed and accepted. This new plan in its final form was executed successfully as Operation Desert Storm.

General Powell had also used this opportunity to transmit his willpower up the chain of command. From his own experience, reinforced by his candid conversation with General Schwarzkopf, he understood that there were not adequate military forces in the Middle East to successfully complete an offensive mission to remove Saddam Hussein’s forces from Kuwait. He intentionally allowed the “unimaginative” plan to be briefed to allow his superiors. The Secretary of Defense and the President reach the same conclusion leaving a stronger impression in their minds.

This incident is an excellent example of willpower transmission by General Powell. He refused to accept failure in the form of implementing an inchoate military plan with inadequate forces. Premature action against the fourth largest Army in the world, well entrenched in Kuwait, over eight thousand miles from the United States could have proven disastrous. He met with his now well-motivated principal subordinate and crafted an offensive plan. This new plan was briefed to the President and approved. Both the drafting of a better plan, and convincing the President to wait until the military would be fully prepared to execute the plan, represent General Powell’s power to affect a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower.

Operation Desert Storm achieved its objective of ejecting the Iraqi Army from Kuwait. In doing so, 147 American troops were killed in action in the process and

another 236 were killed in accidents and other causes.³² Without demeaning their ultimate sacrifice, this is a very small human price in comparison to what could have been had military action been initiated prematurely. This is a very powerful example of producing a desired outcome in others. During his four-year tenure as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the United States military was used in 28 crises around the world. He retired from active service on 30 September 1993, but his service to the nation would continue in another post.

Willpower Transmission as Secretary of State

With the election of George W. Bush as President of the United States, General Colin Powell's service to the nation continued in a new capacity. He was sworn in as the Secretary of State on 20 January 2001. Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the United States faced a threat that had struck closer to home than at any time since World War II. For many, the first thought was how could I help? Others wondered who was responsible? Presuming an answer to the previous question, where are they, and how can we make them accountable for their actions? The questions became harder and harder.

It soon became apparent to the public that an international terrorist group known as al-Qaeda was responsible for planning and executing the attacks on 11 September. This group of terrorists was operating out of Afghanistan, a remote and land-locked country in Asia run by an Islamic fundamentalist group called the Taliban. This would be one of many challenges in what was soon dubbed the Global War on Terrorism--how to reach al-Qaeda? This problem would dominate President Bush's administration and his Secretary of State Colin Powell in the first few days following the attack. How Secretary

Powell used his willpower to overcome this problem will provide another example of willpower at the strategic level of war.

In this case, the problem was complicated by the reality of geography.

Afghanistan is a land locked country that shares borders with six countries on the opposite side of the world from the United States. None of these countries had strong relations with the United States in the fall of 2001. Of these countries, Pakistan shares the largest border with Afghanistan. In order to reach al-Qaeda, and the Taliban government that harbored them, the United States would require at least the tacit agreement of the government of Pakistan for over flight of military aircraft. Actual political and military operations would require even more support from the government of Pakistan. This was initially unlikely due to a number of reasons.

Pakistan's population of over one hundred forty seven million people is 97 percent Muslim, making it the second most populous Islamic nation in the world.³³ Pakistan has an Islamic government, like the Taliban, and was one of only two countries in the world that formally recognized the Taliban as the legitimate ruling power in Afghanistan. Further complicating the situation, the United States had placed economic sanctions on Pakistan following that country's successful testing of a nuclear weapon. These sanctions had a detrimental affect on the economy of Pakistan and lead to General Pervez Musharraf seizing power in a bloodless coup in 1999.³⁴

Having a firm grasp of the diplomatic and geographic challenges that must be overcome prior to military operations starting in Afghanistan, Secretary Powell briefed the president. Pakistan would be the hub around which all strategic spokes would rotate to reach al-Qaeda. What would be necessary amounted to diplomatic arm-twisting on a

grand scale to overcome the long list of obstacles enumerated above. “Do what you have to do,” the President responded.³⁵

Secretary Powell drafted a seven-part ultimatum listing the required support the United States expected from Pakistan to conduct its operations in Afghanistan. He had it delivered to President Musharraf as an all or nothing package. Secretary Powell then called President Musharraf on the phone and said, “As one general to another, we need someone on our flank fighting with us. Speaking candidly, the American people would not understand if Pakistan was not in this fight with the United States.”³⁶ President Musharraf agreed to all seven parts of the ultimatum.

This is a remarkable example of Secretary Powell transmitting his willpower to a foreign head of state on behalf of this country. Secretary Powell continued diplomatic efforts in the face of adversity that the poor relations between the United States and Pakistan represented, the first component of willpower. He refused to accept failure, represented by an agreement to a limited number of the seven-part ultimatum to Pakistan. This is the second component of willpower. Further, he used the common experience shared by these two leaders--both military generals and now diplomats--to his advantage. Secretary Powell spoke plainly, like a soldier, to President Musharraf. This produced the desired effect in him, his approval of the United States ultimatum to Pakistan.

Without this initial success, our country’s other diplomatic, informational, military, and economic responses would be far less successful than they have been thus far in the Global War on Terrorism. When asked in an interview to describe Secretary Powell’s contribution, President Bush responded, “He was very good with [President

Pervez] Musharraf [of Pakistan]. He single-handedly got Musharraf onboard. He was very good about that. He saw the notion of the need to put a coalition together.’³⁷

The word “coalition” the President used does not only refer to America’s dealings with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Once al-Qaeda operations had been at least temporarily disrupted and the Taliban had been removed from power in Afghanistan, the Bush administration’s attention turned to Iraq. In his State of the Union Address, the President had labeled this country “an axis of evil” and was contemplating unilateral military force to remove its weapons of mass destruction as a threat to the safety of the United States. Several key officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld were advocating this course of action. President Bush was considering this unilateral approach. Secretary Powell opposed this option in favor of a multilateral approach. Sensing the strength of the tide he was swimming against, Secretary Powell asked to see the President privately.³⁸

On the evening of 5 August 2002, Secretary Powell sat down with the President and the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice. Over several hours Secretary Powell outlined his case against unilateral action. Speaking from his unique perspective as a career military officer, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for the President’s father, former National Security Advisor, and now as chief diplomat, Secretary Powell’s opinion carried weight. He succinctly stated, “It’s nice to say we can do it unilaterally, except you can’t.”³⁹ The military would require forward operating bases and over-flight rights from other countries. The economic and diplomatic ramifications of a unilateral American invasion of Iraq were of nearly incalculable proportions.

Understanding that it is not enough to simply state that something else will not work, Secretary Powell also brought a proposal. “You can still make a pitch for a coalition or U.N. action to do what needs to be done,” he said.⁴⁰ International support would be critical to future success against Iraq. Following the meeting, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice told Secretary Powell, “that was terrific, and we need to do more of those.”⁴¹

This meeting positively affected the course of United States foreign policy toward Iraq. Shortly after this meeting the President of the United States addressed the United Nations Security Council. In response to this speech, and diplomatic efforts by Secretary Powell, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441 in November 2002. This resolution stated that Iraq had one final chance to disarm itself of weapons of mass destruction.

In this case Secretary Powell transmitted his willpower to his superior. He used the first component of willpower to overcome the adversity that a unilateral approach championed by the Vice President and the Secretary of Defense represented. He used his experience and background to give his analysis of events the credence they deserved. His arguments were positively received by his superior, thus altering the course of foreign policy during a time of war. Secretary Powell produced a desired outcome in the President by convincing him that a multilateral course was proper for the United States. This represents the third component of willpower and it led directly to a Security Council Resolution condemning a threat to this nation’s security.

In this chapter we have analyzed the willpower transmission techniques of Secretary of State Colin Powell. The recipients of Secretary Powell’s willpower included

his subordinates, his peers, his superiors as well as foreign heads of state. In all cases Secretary Powell has proven to be a paragon of willpower transmission. However, Secretary Powell has not always been successful in willpower transmission. Following continued Iraqi intransigence following United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, Secretary Powell was unable to win support for another resolution authorizing the use of military force to ensure compliance. This diplomatic failure can be seen as a failure of willpower. The subject of willpower failure will be further investigated in the next chapter.

¹Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 153. This quote is originally from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. General Powell's has kept it visible on his desk throughout his career due to its significance to him.

²Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication. JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC, 12 April 2001 (Amended 9 January 2003)), 505.

³[Online] Available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc>: Internet accessed on 1 March 2003. The full National Security Council is chaired by the President and includes: the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Advisor. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the statutory military advisor to the President and the NSC and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency is the intelligence advisor. Other members of the Executive Office of the President and the Cabinet may be invited to the meeting as necessary.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Lisa Zeff, prod., *Colin Powell--A Soldiers Campaign*. (New York: A&E Television Program Biography, 1995).

⁶Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 7.

⁷Ibid., 27.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 105.

¹⁰Oren Harari, *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 4.

¹¹Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 113.

¹²Ibid., 123.

¹³Ibid., 130.

¹⁴Ibid., 189.

¹⁵Ibid., 192.

¹⁶Ibid., 255.

¹⁷Ibid., 319.

¹⁸Ibid., 317.

¹⁹Ibid., 320.

²⁰Ibid., 321.

²¹Ibid., 326-332.

²²Ibid., 326-7.

²³Ibid., 340.

²⁴Ibid., 389.

²⁵Ibid., 446-9.

²⁶Ibid, 470.

²⁷Ibid, 471.

²⁸Ibid., 472.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 474.

³²Ibid., 513.

³³2002 CIA Fact Book. [online] Available from www.cia.gov. Downloaded 10 March 2003.

³⁴Bob Woodward, *Bush At War*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 58-59. A note of caution is in order on using Mr. Woodward's book as a source. Mr. Woodward is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and is well respected for his thorough research. While the author does not have the temerity to question Mr. Woodward's integrity, he has written his book as if he was a witness to many conversations. This is simply not true and he is upfront with this fact. What he has done, however, is to reconstruct actual conversations after conducting research, cross-references, and numerous interviews with the people he is quoting. At best these quotations represent a very close paraphrase or synopsis, but probably not the actual conversation. They do, however, illustrate the main points of the conversation, and are of historical value. The reader should have a full understanding of what they are, and what they are not.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 342.

³⁸Ibid., 330-2.

³⁹Ibid., 333.

⁴⁰Ibid., 334.

⁴¹Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

DOES WILLPOWER GUARANTEE SUCCESS?

A Study of the Methods of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur

The object of any warring nation is victory, immediate and complete.

-General Douglas MacArthur, testimony before Congress, 1931¹

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a measure of objectivity to the study of willpower. It is not the intention of this thesis to suggest that willpower alone can make a military leader successful. Rather, willpower is one characteristic or tool that a military leader may have at his disposal to accomplish a mission. Willpower, the amalgamation of continuing in the face of adversity, refusing to accept failure, and the power to produce a desired effect in others, is helpful in creating the conditions for success. To this point the thesis has concentrated on three military leaders, at different levels of warfare, who have successfully employed willpower as defined by the author. In this chapter the author will study a military leader who also possessed willpower, yet failed.

The subject of this chapter will be General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. This chapter is not intended to be a critique of strengths and weaknesses of this famous officer. Rather, it will apply the same analysis techniques as the previous chapters to show that General MacArthur had, and employed, the characteristic of willpower. The desired objectivity will be achieved by showing that an extremely successful military officer, as MacArthur unquestionably was, had willpower and still failed. This will prove that willpower is not the only ingredient in a recipe for success. Similarly, the lack of willpower does not necessarily forecast failure. However, only an analysis of one leader

that had willpower, and still failed, will be provided due to space limitations of this thesis.

Background & Biographical Sketch

Douglas MacArthur spent almost his entire life in the Army; he was born on 26 January 1880 on an Arkansas Army post.² His father, Arthur MacArthur, was a career Army officer who had been decorated with the Congressional Medal of Honor for spontaneously leading a decisive charge up Missionary Ridge during the Civil War.³ After reaching the rank of colonel during the war, Arthur MacArthur had reverted in rank and was made a captain for a second time in 1868. He would hold this rank for twenty-three years due to sluggish post war promotion rates as he served on a string of frontier Army posts.⁴

The example of both his mother and father may have taught Douglas MacArthur that the use of family connections was sometimes necessary in difficult situations. His father's military career was rescued from the twenty-three year rank stagnation by the intervention of Douglas' grandfather, a politically connected judge.⁵ Both his father and grandfather used their connections to help gain Douglas' appointment to West Point. His mother wrote letters to the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff of the Army (she knew both personally) asking for a promotion for her son.⁶ None of these appeals were the only factor in securing these favors. They did not hurt either, and may have taught Douglas MacArthur 'how the world really worked.'

None of this is meant to say that Douglas MacArthur did not earn it. He graduated first in his class in 1903 and was voted 'most likely to succeed.'⁷ He became the Army's first public relations officer and was largely responsible for the passage of the selective

service act in 1917 that helped prepare the country for World War I.⁸ His accomplishments on the battlefields of France earned him promotion to Brigadier General and made him the most decorated soldier of World War I.⁹ He became Chief of Staff of the Army in 1930, 'Field Marshal' of the military mission to the Philippines, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹⁰

General MacArthur was a master of persuasion, a willpower transmission technique that he put to good use. In the summer of 1944, the great strategic question in the Pacific theater was 'where to go next?' The pre-war plans called for an assault on Formosa; a strategy favored by a majority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General MacArthur favored the liberation of the Philippines: at least in part due to his famous promise, "I shall return." President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to hear the opinions of his two Pacific commanders (Admiral Nimitz being the other) to decide the question.

The meeting occurred in Pearl Harbor in July of 1944. After dinner, the president approached a wall-sized map of the Pacific Ocean and said, "Well Douglas, where do we go from here?"¹¹ Over the course of the next several hours, General MacArthur presented an eloquent series of arguments that advocated the Philippines. The reasons for this strategic objective included: securing the archipelago because it would sever the Japanese lines of communication with the Dutch East Indies; the favorable political impact with voters in the fall elections; and it was a question of honor, "promises must be kept."¹² When the meeting was concluded, the answer to the great strategic question was the liberation of the Philippines.

General MacArthur's 'selling' of the Philippines strategy is a prime example of willpower transmission. General MacArthur overcame the opposition to his strategy by

the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is an example of General MacArthur continuing in the face of adversity, the first component of willpower. By talking President Roosevelt around to his point of view of returning to the Philippines, General MacArthur was producing a desired effect in his superior. This is a clear example of the third component of willpower. Over the course of General MacArthur's fifty-year career, there are dozens of possible examples of willpower transmission. The key issue here is how to provide a summary of his willpower transmission while showing objectively that willpower alone does not guarantee success.

In order to do this, the author will focus on two willpower transmission examples from General MacArthur's involvement in the Korean conflict. This is reasonable due to the conflicted nature of General MacArthur's personality. As one of his biographer's, William Manchester, points out,

He was a great thundering paradox of a man, noble and ignoble, inspiring and outrageous, arrogant and shy, the best of men and the worst of men, the most protean, most ridiculous, and most sublime. For every MacArthur strength there was a corresponding MacArthur weakness.¹³

In the spirit of this duality, a short period that contains arguably his greatest success, and his greatest failure, would be an equitable way of encapsulating the whole in a limited number of pages. The author has selected General MacArthur's willpower transmission leading up to the invasion of Inchon and the period leading up to his relief to serve as the basis for the objective portion of this study.

Operation Chromite--the invasion of Inchon

On 25 June 1950, the North Korean People's Army attacked south across the 38th Parallel that had divided North and South Korea since the end of World War II. The

People's Army of 90,000 men quickly overwhelmed the South Korean forces and the Republic of Korea (ROK) government made appeals to the United Nations for assistance. General MacArthur, in his capacity as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), and Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) decided he needed to see the situation for himself. On 29 July General MacArthur stood on a small roadside hilltop on the south bank of the Han River, within sight of the enemy's mortar blasts, and watched the capital city of Seoul burn.¹⁴

From this vantage he claims to have reached two conclusions. First, his occupation forces in Japan would need to be thrown "into the breach," in order to buy time because, "the defensive potential" of the fleeing South Korean troops "had already been exhausted."¹⁵ Second, he would need to launch an amphibious envelopment to defeat the People's Army to "wrest victory from defeat."¹⁶ This concept would later become Operation Chromite, the invasion of Inchon.

At this early point General MacArthur displayed his refusal to accept failure, the second component of willpower, which the invasion of South Korea represented. When General MacArthur was appointed to lead the UN forces designated to restore the international borders, he would need to overcome more than just North Korean resistance to achieve victory in this manner.

The reasons that General MacArthur's plan to invade Inchon would be resisted were as many as they were valid. Therefore, he was intentionally vague on his specific objective until after the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) had approved the concept of an amphibious operation. In numerous messages, the newly anointed United Nations Commander enumerated his reasons to the reluctant Pentagon: it would present the North

Koreans with a two front war; it would cut off their communications and starve their troops; it would seize a large port vital for follow-on operations; it would deal the enemy a great psychological blow by recapturing the capital of Seoul. The persistence of the septuagenarian was rewarded on 25 July when the JCS approved his plan in concept and allocated a Marine division for its spearhead.¹⁷

When General MacArthur revealed the location for the intended amphibious operation to his staff, they were beyond skeptical. There is no beach at Inchon, only piers and seawalls, leading directly into the heart of the city. Currents through the torturous Flying Fish channel ran as high as 8 knots around numerous rocks, shoals and other hazards to navigation. There were fortified islands that protected the approach to Inchon as well as the possibility of mines. Inchon violated all seven principles of naval doctrine for amphibious operations and had every single natural and geographic handicap. The worst feature, the tidal range, was one of the largest in the world--32 feet. The tidal range was so drastic that landing craft could reach the shore only on specific days each month, and then only for a short period before the tide went back out stranding the landing craft and preventing reinforcements. Every staff officer was against it, including the 8th Army Commander whose forces would be relieved by the landing. When the JCS learned the objective was to be Inchon, they dispatched Admiral Sherman, the Navy Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and General Collins, the Army Chief of Staff, to a conference at General MacArthur's headquarters to recommend a change of objective.¹⁸

The conference began with nine staff officers, who spoke for a combined eighty minutes, summarizing the arguments critical of the objective. The room was silent waiting for General MacArthur to respond as he puffed his pipe. In his memoirs he

claims, “I could almost hear my father’s voice telling me, ‘Doug, councils of war breed timidity and defeatism.’”¹⁹ Dramatized apocrypha or fact, following the pause he stood and spoke without notes for thirty minutes rebutting every point.

“The very argument you have made as to the impracticabilites involved,” were the reasons the plan would succeed. “The enemy commander will reason that no one would be brash enough as to make such an attempt.”²⁰ Because of this, they would completely surprise the enemy at Inchon. He then subtly questioned the audacity and professional competence of the naval officers, daring them to attempt his cunning plan. Inchon’s hazards may be real, he said directly to the CNO, “but they are not insuperable...I seem to have more confidence in the Navy than the Navy has in itself.”²¹ He admitted that it was dangerous to take a ship into a confined harbor that could be subject to an artillery barrage. However he would be present so he could give the order to withdraw if it became too dangerous. Rear Admiral Doyle, the commander of the landing forces, interrupted, “No, General, we don’t know how to do that, once we start ashore we’ll keep going.”²² Admiral Sherman, the Navy CNO rejoined, “I wouldn’t hesitate to take a ship in there.”²³ General MacArthur responded, “Spoken like a Farragut!”²⁴ The initially reluctant naval officers had accepted the General’s challenge.

General MacArthur completed his oratory by stating, “I can almost hear the ticking of the second hand of destiny...Inchon will succeed.”²⁵ The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Sherman called him “spellbinding.”²⁶ Both he and General Collins returned to the Pentagon recommending approval for the plan to the JCS. General MacArthur had resolutely stuck to his plan. This example displayed General MacArthur’s use of the first component of willpower, continuing in the face of adversity. He used his

hypnotizing power of dramatic oratory to convince his staff officers to overcome their doubts. Employing the only tactic likely to succeed, General MacArthur subtly questioned the professional manhood of the Navy to turn their opposition into indignant excitement. In this manner, General MacArthur affected a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower. He had used his willpower to ‘sell’ his plan to his subordinates and his superiors.

Operation Chromite (see Figure 7 below) was an overwhelming victory. Between 15 September (X Corp landings date) and 28 September (X Corp and 8th Army link up at Osan and the liberation of Seoul), the American forces had achieved all of their

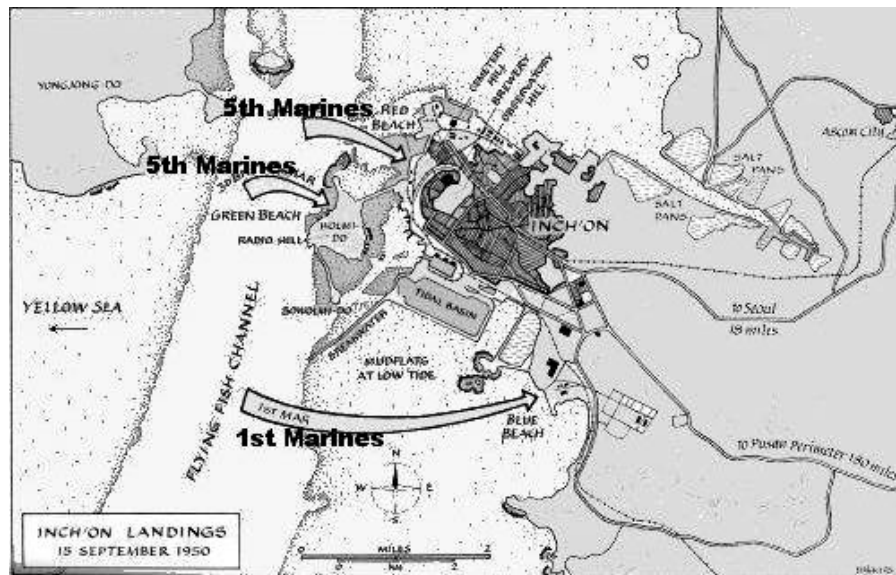


Figure 7: Operation Chromite – Landings at Inchon. Source: www.paulnoll.com. Downloaded 3/12/03.

objectives. X Corp casualties had been light, 3500 total, compared to 14,000 People's Army killed and 7,000 prisoners. Additionally, a large percentage of the People's Army had been trapped in the southwestern portion of the peninsula rendering the bulk of the North Korean forces incapable of further resistances. The operation was, unquestionably, a desirable military outcome.²⁷

Following quickly on the heels of the impressive victory at Inchon, American and United Nations objectives became more inclusive. It was feared that since the North Korean leadership had not been captured, they could reconstitute their military and threaten South Korea again at a later date. General MacArthur, therefore, received authorization to destroy the remnants of the People's Army above the 38th parallel. This action to conquer North Korea and affect reunification by force could be justified under a broad interpretation of the UN mandate dated 27 June that stated UN forces should act "to restore international peace and stability to the area."²⁸ The change in strategy to occupy a communist country that shares a border with both China and the Soviet Union was of questionable wisdom when weighed against the words of NSC-68 that warned that the risk of war existed from "US miscalculations of Soviet reactions to measures which we might make."²⁹

In this case it was miscalculations of Chinese reactions to US measures that widened the war. As General MacArthur was launching a series of final attacks near the Chinese-North Korean border in late November 1950 designed "to have the boys home by Christmas," twenty-six Chinese divisions, more than 200,000 men, attacked the United Nations forces.³⁰ The United States had disregarded a 3 October statement from the Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai as a bluff. He had warned that, "American intrusion into

North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance.”³¹ As UN troops were forced to fall back before the onslaught of Chinese troops, the strategic question became how to respond to what General MacArthur called “a whole new war.”³²

The Relief of General MacArthur

The disagreements over how to cope with the entrance of China into the war started immediately. General MacArthur ordered the bridges over the Yalu River bombed to prevent Chinese reinforcements. The JCS ordered him not to bomb any targets within five miles of the river. General MacArthur responded by going over the head of the JCS to the President for approval.³³ There was very little enthusiasm for fighting a land war in Asia against the most populous country in the world. There was very serious talk of even pulling all UN forces completely off the Korean peninsula and abandoning the war completely in early December 1950.³⁴ The Truman administration and a majority of the UN allies were ready to accept a divided Korea, if a divided Korea could be salvaged from a limited war. The JCS asked General MacArthur for his recommendations.

General MacArthur outlined a plan to broaden the war and destroy the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) ability to project military power onto the Korean peninsula. In this way, he believed he could win a unified democratic Korea. To do this he recommended: placing a naval blockage of the Chinese coast; using naval gun-fire and air force bombers to destroy Chinese factories; using the Republic of China forces to either reinforce UN forces in Korea or attack the Chinese mainland to open a second front. All of his recommendations were rejected for a collection of diplomatic or political reasons stemming from a reticence to ‘widen the war.’ On 9 January 1951, he received instructions from the JCS to continue to resist avoiding “severe loss of men and

material.” If he was in danger of becoming overrun, he should, “withdraw from Korea to Japan.”³⁵

President Truman, and his political and military advisors, had solid logic behind their opposition to General MacArthur’s recommendations. In the early 1950s the United States was focusing on strengthening its military powers in Europe under the umbrella of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). This policy was a means of implementing the ‘containment of communism’ as recommended in NSC-68 to counter a growing threat from a nuclear capable Soviet Union.³⁶ General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, summed up the logic behind refusing to widen the war in Korea this way, “it was the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong enemy.”³⁷

By the end of January 1951, the 8th Army Commander, General Ridgway, had halted the PRC advance and was starting to counterattack. The war was by no stretch won but the military situation had drastically improved over the previous month.³⁸ Against this backdrop, General MacArthur called a press conference on 7 March in violation of the President’s gag rule. He called for a substantial reinforcement to his army or the conflict would stabilize into a bloody stalemate. To avert this, he recommended decisions by the “highest international level” that he was unable to make.³⁹ General MacArthur was embarking on a public crusade to change the strategy for the Korean War.

By 20 March, the United States was conferring with allies over the terms of peace to be offered to China. General MacArthur, as the UN Commander was informed that the President intended to make terms shortly after UN forces had regained the pre-war international frontier. Within days, General MacArthur made a taunting public statement demanding the Chinese surrender to him, stating that China had “shown its complete

inability to accomplish by force of arms the conquest of Korea.”⁴⁰ President Truman was not pleased. He observed, “General MacArthur had...displayed splendid leadership, but I want him to accept, as a soldier should, the political decisions which the civil authorities of the government had determined upon.”⁴¹ The Chinese reacted with indignation, stating “The people of China must raise their sense of vigilance by doubling their efforts for a sacred struggle.”⁴² General MacArthur, at cross-purposes with the government, had intentionally torpedoed a diplomatic initiative because he did not agree with accepting a limited war strategy.

Having prevented an attempt to end a stalemated, limited war in a manner in which he did not agree, General MacArthur searched for support to fight and win the broader war in a manner he felt appropriate. He found a willing partner in this effort in Congressman Joe Martin, the House Minority Leader, who was a strong political opponent of President Truman. Congressman Martin favored a strategy in line with one General MacArthur had recommended to the JCS. He made a speech of 12 February, which concluded, “If we are not in Korea to win, then this Truman administration should be indicted for the murder of thousands of American boys.”⁴³ He sent a copy of his speech to General MacArthur and solicited his comment on its content.

General MacArthur responded to Congressman Martin with a letter dated 20 March 1951. A few days later, Congressman Martin took the floor and read the letter into the congressional record. General MacArthur’s letter praised Congressman Martin’s views and took an even more direct swipe at the Presidential strategy:

It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communists conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight

Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to Communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom. As you point out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.⁴⁴

General MacArthur was doing more than expressing his view that was contrary to the President's and his advisors. General MacArthur's letter was a willpower transmission technique. He was attempting to use a political alliance and the power of public opinion to have the limited war strategy changed in favor of what he saw as a desired outcome--a broader strategy designed for victory. He was attempting to overcome the resistance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense, and a politically weak President, by going around them to Congress and the public.

President Truman later said that the long quote above was "the real 'clincher'."⁴⁵ He asked the Joint Chiefs to make a recommendation on how to respond to General MacArthur's actions. They replied that he should be recalled, on a constitutional basis, because, "The military must be controlled by civilian authority."⁴⁶ General MacArthur was stripped of his command and retired.

Conclusion

As this last vignette should have made clear, General MacArthur attempted a willpower transmission technique that was both insubordinate and violated the constitutional basis for our government and military. This example is meant to illustrate that willpower alone does not guarantee success. General MacArthur clearly possessed willpower as defined in this thesis and used it successfully on numerous occasions. Ultimately, what led to his removal as UN Commander, CINCFE, and SCAP was a blatant, public, and insubordinate attempt to transmit his willpower to his superior. While

it could be argued by others that it may have been moral, it certainly was not in keeping with good judgment. Willpower, like any other tool, must be used at the proper time and in the proper manner. It should be used in conjunction with other mental leadership attributes discussed in FM 22-100 *Army Leadership*: self-discipline, initiative, judgment, and intelligence, to name just a few.⁴⁷

¹William Manchester, *American Caesar-Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 629.

²*Ibid.*, 26.

³*Ibid.*, 14-5.

⁴*Ibid.*, 20.

⁵*Ibid.*, 26-8.

⁶*Ibid.*, 92-3, 134-5.

⁷*Ibid.*, 56-60.

⁸*Ibid.*, 76-77.

⁹The American Experience, General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964). [Online]; available from www.pbs.org/whbh/amex/macarthur/peoplevents/pandeAMEX96.html; Internet; accessed 11 March 2003.

¹⁰William Manchester, *American Caesar-Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 143-4, 162-4, 275-6.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 363-73.

¹²*Ibid.*, 368-9.

¹³*Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁴D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, Vol. III Triumph and Disaster 1945-1964*. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1985), 418-26.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 426-7.

¹⁶Ibid., 480-2.

¹⁷William Manchester, *American Caesar-Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 572-3.

¹⁸Ibid., 574-5.

¹⁹Ibid., 575.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 576.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid. This historical complement refers to Union Rear Admiral David Farragut, famous for many exploits during the Civil War. At the Battle of Mobile Bay he bravely commanded, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" to launch his ships through mined waters into battle.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, Vol. III Triumph and Disaster 1945-1964*. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1985), 480-2.

²⁸Ibid., 486.

²⁹National Security Council. *NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (April 14, 1950) – A Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950*. (Washington DC, 1950) [Online] available from www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm; Internet; accessed on 12 March 2003.

³⁰William Manchester, *American Caesar-Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 606-8.

³¹Ibid., 607.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 603.

³⁴Ibid., 611.

³⁵Ibid., 622.

³⁶D. Clayton James, *Command Crisis: MacArthur and the Korean War*, The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History No. 24 (Colorado Springs, CO: Department of History, United States Air Force Academy, 1982), 1-14.

³⁷William Manchester, *American Caesar-Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 612.

³⁸Ibid., 625.

³⁹Ibid., 633.

⁴⁰Ibid., 634.

⁴¹Ibid., 617-8.

⁴²Ibid., 635.

⁴³Ibid., 638.

⁴⁴Ibid., 639.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., 641.

⁴⁷Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC, 31 August 1999), 2-10-14.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF WILLPOWER

With 2,000 years of example behind us we have no excuse when fighting,
for not fighting well. -T. E. Lawrence

The kernel of meaning in T. E. Lawrence's quote above is that we should profit from the experience of those that have gone before us. In this spirit, what can be learned from the military leaders that are the subjects for this study of willpower? In review, willpower is the amalgamation of the following: continuing in the face of adversity, refusing to accept failure, and the power to produce a desired effect in others. This chapter will provide observations and general conclusions that have been reached in completing this study.

This thesis determined how a leader generates willpower and then transmits it to others to produce a desired effect as the primary research question. In order to inform the primary question, several secondary questions were also considered. Is there a 'common thread' in the willpower generation or transmission among the subjects of this study? Are there differences in willpower transmission at the different levels of war, as defined in doctrine? And finally, has willpower transmission changed over the period studied, from the first half of the 1940s until today? Observations and a conclusion will be presented in the same order that the secondary questions appear above, followed by the primary question.

Commonalities in Willpower Generation and Transmission

To begin, consider the first half of the primary research question: how does a leader generate his willpower? This question reduces to a personal, internal, value-based

judgment influenced by the leader's previous experiences. Similarities in the early life experiences of these four leaders may provide a clue to the genesis of willpower.

In the case of all four of the subjects studied, the military leaders had very trying early life experiences: General Powell was born in Harlem, the son of immigrants; Lieutenant General Moore saw combat in the Korean War; and both General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz were born and raised in frontier towns in the American west before it was 'won.' It is plausible then, that the challenging environments taught these men the values of persistence and determination early in their lives or career. Therefore, tough life experiences that teach persistence may serve as the basis for willpower generation.

The most striking similarity among three of the four subjects was the importance of a strong father figure. GEN MacArthur in many ways spent his entire life trying to measure up to his father's record of military achievement. Admiral Nimitz's Grandfather was the nautical influence in the Texas prairie. GEN Powell referred to his father as, "The formative figure in his life."¹ The fact that the research for this thesis did not discover evidence in the case of LTG Moore does not weaken the validity of this similarity among the other three.

Another commonality between all four subjects is the ability to learn from their past mistakes. All of the subjects displayed the ability to be self-critical and analyze their own mistakes. They then codified lesson learned, adding to them throughout their careers, and used them to avoid repeating mistakes. Preventing past mistakes from recurrence is a preemptive effort at the second component of willpower: refusing to accept failure.

Continuing with a search for commonalities, consider similarities in the second half of the primary question: willpower transmission to others. It is interesting to note that all four of the subjects had non-routine careers in the military. LTG Moore was among the first to apply the capabilities of the helicopter and assisted in developing tactics and doctrine for its use on the battlefield. General MacArthur was the first public affairs officer in the Army. In this position, he used the expanding power of the media to build public support for the Army and the selective service prior to World War I. In addition to elite parachute infantry training, General Powell was educated at the National War College and served as a White House fellow. This education and experience prepared him to deal with the political dimensions at the higher levels of war. Admiral Nimitz was a submarine officer and a diesel engine expert. Both of these technologies were the cutting edge of naval warfare and being introduced to the fleet for the first time when Admiral Nimitz became familiar with them.

What can these non-routine military careers tell us about willpower transmission? The psychologist Janowitz proposes, “that the effectiveness of military leaders tends to vary inversely with their exposure to a routine military career.”² There may be an element of the ‘the chicken or the egg’ in this proposition. Regardless of which came first, none of our four subjects had a ‘routine’ career. All four were very effective leaders and they all developed effective, individual methods of willpower transmission. These novel techniques increased their ability to affect a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower. Therefore, they were all innovators who developed new and highly effective means to transmit their willpower.

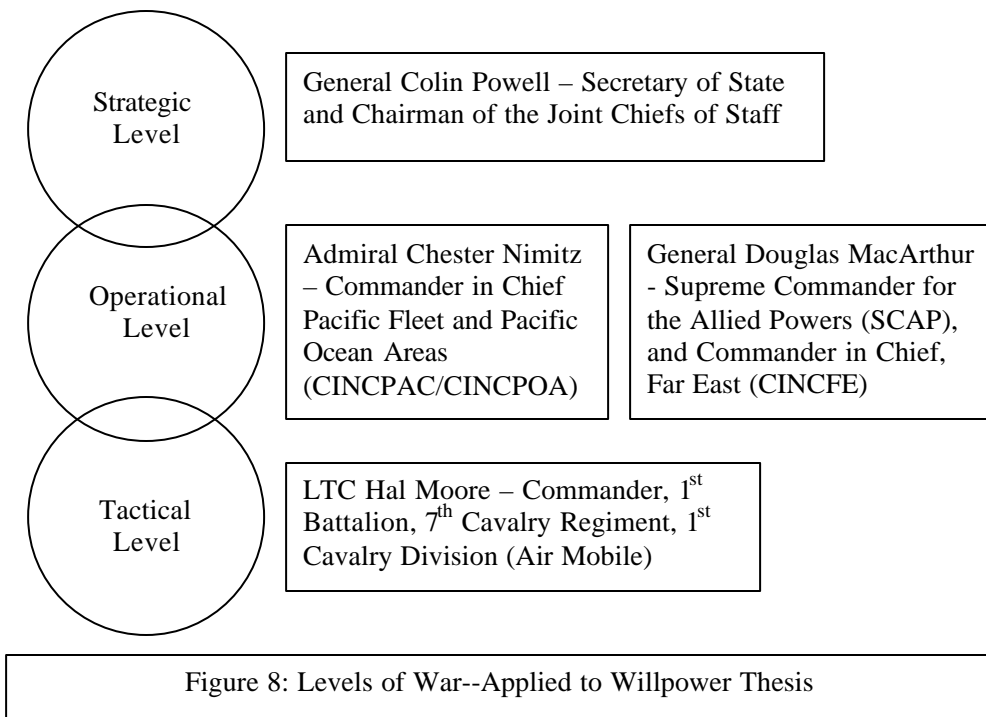
Another similarity that all four subjects shared is excellent communication skills. While they all had their individual command style, all four of the subjects in this thesis could clearly communicate their vision to others. Regardless of the communication medium, verbally or written, all of the commanders expressed themselves in a manner that was easy for others to understand. This clear understanding of the commander's intent made it easier for others to change the vision into reality. Thus, excellent communication skills directly contributed to the third element of willpower: the power to affect a desired outcome in others.

Differences in Willpower Transmission

The structure of the thesis analysis method was intentionally designed to assist in identifying differences in willpower transmission methods. The methods used by the four military leaders studied cover the three levels of war (see Figure 8 below).

There are identifiable differences in willpower transmission at the different levels of war. At the higher levels of war, leaders tend to spend more of their time and energy outside their military organization. This can be seen in leaders at the higher levels of war focusing willpower on superiors and others outside their organization. In contrast, at the lower levels of war, leaders focus their willpower nearly exclusively on subordinates within their organization.

For example, at the strategic level, Secretary Powell convinced President George W. Bush that the United States needed to pursue a multilateral approach in the Global War on Terrorism. At the operational level of war, both GEN MacArthur and ADM Nimitz met with President Roosevelt to discuss proposed strategic options for the Pacific



theater. At the tactical level of war, LTG Moore focused the majority of his willpower on the soldiers within his unit.

This difference may be partially explained by the nature of the job at the strategic level of war. At the very top of a military or government department, the superior is less likely to have in-depth knowledge and experience in the capabilities and limitations of the military or other government department. Therefore, it becomes increasingly necessary to transmit willpower to the superior to affect the desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower.

Another difference observed is the leader's flexibility to select, and remove, key subordinates. At lower levels of war, a leader can organize his resources within his organization in the manner he believes most likely to accomplish success. However, the leader is limited in his ability add or remove subordinates. At the higher levels of war, a leader is granted more freedom to 'hire and fire.'

This difference may be caused in part by the unique structure and assignment policy of the military. At the tactical level, a military leader may not have the luxury of 'hiring' the right person, in part due to the replacement systems currently used by the US Armed Forces. Very often a tactical or organizational level leader must play the cards he is dealt. At the strategic level, a more senior military leader has the ability to influence the assignment system to his advantage. An FM 22-100 *Leadership* makes clear, "strategic level leader have not only the authority but also the responsibility to pick the best people for their staffs."³ Strategic level leaders have a higher chance of success if they can pick personnel for their organization with superior perspicacity. It is easier to transmit your willpower to a like-minded individual and a strategic level leader is more likely to be able to pick a subordinate than a tactical level leader.

Changes in Willpower Transmission Over Time

There is no observable indication of change in willpower transmission methods used by the subjects over the sixty-year time period studied. Any observed differences in methods were a reflection of personal preference. Normalizing for personality differences leaves no conclusive evidence of change. Clearly warfare has changed over the period due to technological advancement, political, and ideological changes in the world. While

also making allowances for these factors, it is the subjective judgment of the author that willpower transmission has not changed.

The time period studied, approximately sixty years, is relatively short. During this period, the nature of man has not changed as rapidly (if at all) as the world around man has changed. While these changes are certainly the work of man, man is still relatively unchanged. Therefore, what motivates man is relatively constant also. This explains why willpower transmission has not changed during the period studied.

Willpower Generation And Transmission

As suggested earlier, the genesis of willpower comes partially from early life experiences. These experiences teach leaders persistence. Within the military, this determination becomes the basis for the warrior ethos and can be harnessed in the form of willpower. Given this innate refusal to accept failure, the question still remains: How does a leader transfer his willpower to others to produce a desired outcome?

Ultimately, the answer may be a variable of individual style. In this study several examples were shown where leaders employed methods that included stubborn resistance, coercion, challenges to manhood, and intellectual argument. By placing any number of leaders in a room, you will have multiple or variable methods of willpower transmission present. However, one general observation and conclusion can be drawn.

The key lesson is that a leader is well served by creating within his organization something the author has referred to as the 'culture of excellence.' Success is a habit for an organization where a leader has nurtured this environment. All four of the leaders studied were successful in creating this culture within their organizations. A successful organization that is continuously striving for first place has, by definition, already

continued in the face of adversity and refused to accept failure. In this manner, a leader is using the first and second component of willpower. Furthermore, this makes it much easier to affect a desired outcome in others, the third component of willpower.

This thesis argued that to be effective, that a leader must possess more than stubborn determination or will. Assuming the presence of will, it is also necessary to do something with it in order to produce a desired affect in others. This combination of determination, and the ability to produce a desired affect in others, is defined by the author as willpower. Through willpower a leader can bring about decisive events. However, as the objective fifth chapter clearly shows, the possession of willpower does not guarantee success. Willpower is only one component or leadership attribute that a leader should possess to be successful.

¹Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 231.

²Norman Dixon, *On The Psychology of Military Incompetence*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), 348.

³Department of the Army, U.S. Army Field Manual. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC, 31 August 1999), 7-6.

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